

English Level 10

Chapter 2 — Language: crafting ideas at the sentence level

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Shaping ideas with sentence choices

Two students are called in to explain the same broken window. One says, “Jake broke the window.” The other says, “The window was broken.” Both tell the truth. Only one of them tells you who did it. The facts have not changed — the sentence structure has, and that is all it took to change the story.

This section is about the choices writers make at the level of the single sentence, and about how to judge them. You will study three structures — the **passive voice**, the **verbless clause**, and the **conjunction opener** — first as a reader who can name what they do, then as a writer who uses them on purpose.

Curriculum focus	VC2E10LA05 (Language — Language for expressing and developing ideas)
Draws on	VC2E10LA05.E01, VC2E10LA05.E02, VC2E10LA05.E03
Builds on (Level 9)	VC2E9LA05
Modes in this section	Reading and viewing · Writing · Speaking and listening

What we mean by *effective*. The Victorian Curriculum uses the word *effective* but does not define it. In this section, a sentence structure is treated as **effective** when it does the job its writer set for it: it puts the right idea in focus, it fits the purpose and the audience, and it helps the text move. *Effective* is not the same as *correct* — an active sentence and a passive sentence can both be perfectly correct; the question is which one does the work. Every judgement in this section is answerable on that definition alone.

Theory

1. The sentence is a workshop

In Level 9 you met writers who break the complete-sentence rule on purpose — the fragment that lands like a camera cut, the lone dependent clause that hangs in the air. You know those moves exist, and you know they are choices. This year the work goes one step further, and the step is in the verbs of the content description: **analyse** and **evaluate**.

- To **analyse** a sentence structure is to name it and trace what it does: which idea it puts in the spotlight, which it pushes to the edge, and what it asks the reader to supply.
- To **evaluate** it is to judge how well it does that job — for this purpose, this audience, this idea. Evaluation always needs a standard, so every judging task in this section uses the same three questions, given in full in part 6.

The three structures in this section are all ways of moving the reader’s attention:

1. the **passive voice** — moves the spotlight from the doer of an action to its receiver (part 2);
2. the **verbless clause** — removes the verb entirely, so a detail stands alone and the reader leans in (part 3);
3. the **conjunction opener** — starts a sentence with *and*, *but* or *so*, turning the link between two sentences into a beat the reader can feel (part 4).

2. Focus and voice: the passive at work

A **clause** is a group of words built around a verb. In English, the most common clause has a **subject** (who or what the clause is about) before the verb. **Voice** is the grammatical term for how a clause lines up the subject with the action:

- In the **active voice**, the subject *does* the action: *The police had caught the thief.*
- In the **passive voice**, the subject *receives* the action: *The thief had been caught.*

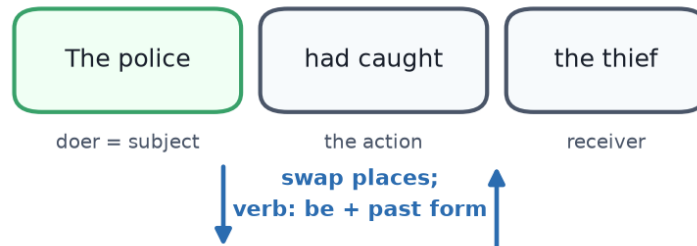
The **agent** of a clause is whoever or whatever does the action. In an active clause the agent and the subject are the same thing — the police. In a passive clause the agent can be kept, tacked on in a *by*-phrase (*by the police*), or dropped altogether. Dropping it is what makes the passive so powerful — and so worth watching.

Figure 1 shows the swap. The same event, the same words almost — but the spotlight has moved from the doer to the receiver, and the doer can walk out of the sentence entirely.

Same event, different spotlight

One clause, two arrangements. The spotlight follows the subject.

ACTIVE VOICE — the doer leads



PASSIVE VOICE — the receiver leads



Drop the by-phrase, and the doer leaves the sentence entirely:

"The thief had been caught." (Who caught the thief? The sentence no longer says.)

Labelled diagram showing the same event in the active and passive voice, with arrows marking how the receiver moves to the front and the doer can be dropped

Writers reach for the passive for three main reasons. Figure 2 lists them with original examples and the test to apply to each one.

Why choose the passive?

Three reasons, three tests. All examples written for this book.

	The reason	Original example	Judge it
1	The receiver of the action matters most	"The bridge was closed on Tuesday."	Is the receiver what the reader most needs? Then the passive fits.
2	The doer is unknown or beside the point	"My bike was stolen last night."	Is the doer truly unknown? Then the passive is honest.
3	The doer is kept out of sight	"The windows were broken."	Who broke them? If the writer knows and hides them, ask why.

Reasons 1 and 2 move the spotlight. Reason 3 can hide the doer — that is where evaluation begins.

Table of the three main reasons writers choose the passive voice, each with an original example and a question for judging it

The third reason is where evaluation begins. Because the passive can drop the agent, it is the structure of choice when a writer wants the action reported without anyone standing next to it. Read these two versions of the same announcement:

A. The principal cancelled the excursion. B. The excursion was cancelled.

Version A hands you someone to thank or blame. Version B hands you an event with nobody attached to it. Both are honest sentences. Only one of them tells you who decided.

Two views of the passive — both defensible.

The strongest case for it: the passive is the ordinary voice of science writing (*the solution was heated to 60 degrees*), of much news reporting, and of any text where the receiver matters and the doer does not. Saying "my bike was stolen" is natural because you do not know the thief. Here the passive is not a trick; it is accuracy.

The strongest case against it: the same structure lets institutions report actions without owners. "The fee was raised", "mistakes were made", "the file was lost" — each one is a true sentence with no responsible person inside it. Critics are right that the passive is the favoured shape of the excuse.

Both views are correct because they describe different uses of one structure. The analytical question is never "is this passive good or bad?" but **"does the doer matter here, and has the writer named them?"**

Question 13 asks you to argue this properly.

A quick diagnostic you can use anywhere: try putting the *by*-phrase back. If the writer cannot say who did it — or will not — the passive is hiding the agent. That may be tact, or it may be evasion, and the difference is exactly what you are being asked to judge.

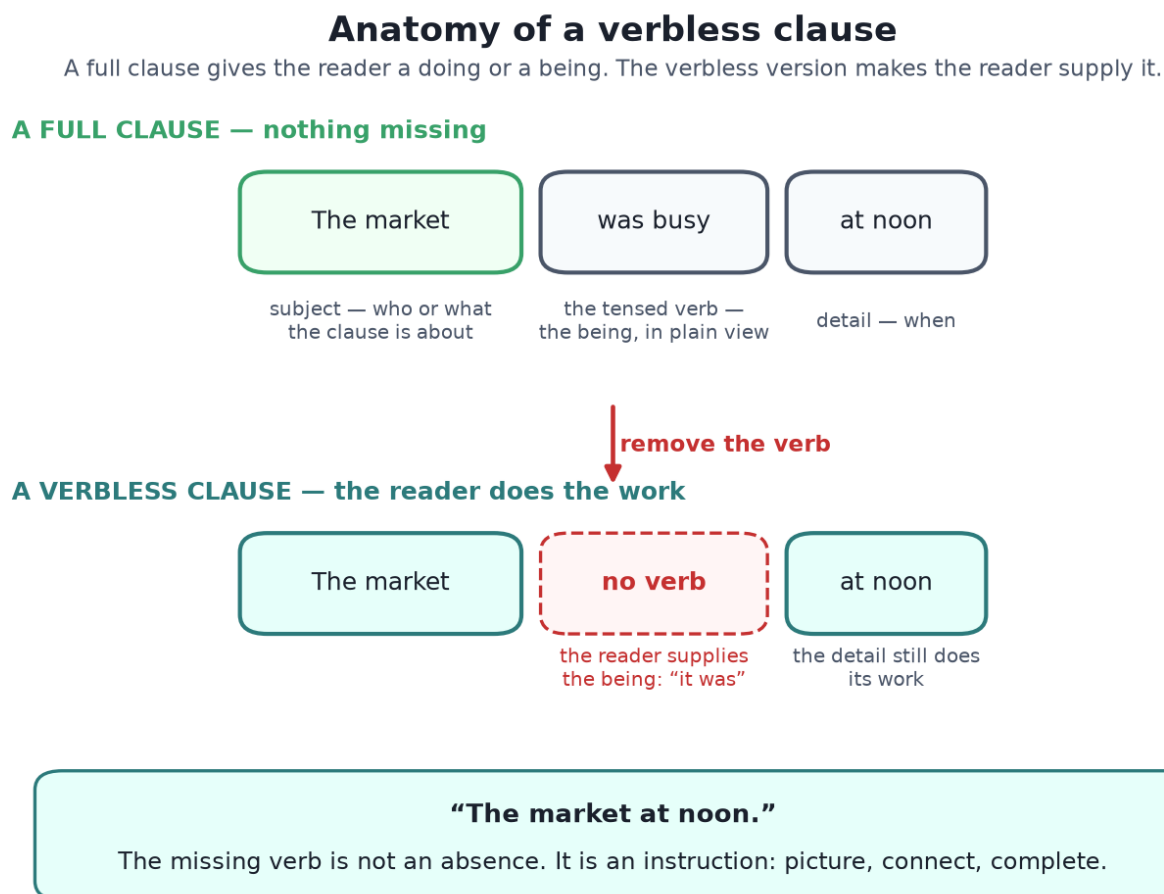
3. The verbless clause: a detail left standing

A **verbless clause** is a clause-like group of words that does its work with no tensed verb — no verb carrying a tense. A story can use one like this:

And what about the new neighbour? A borrowed ute and a restless blue dog.

A borrowed ute and a restless blue dog has no verb at all, yet it behaves like a clause: it adds detail about someone, and a reader takes it in as part of the scene. In Level 9 you called this family of moves *fragments*. At Level 10 the question sharpens: **what work does the missing verb make the reader do?**

Figure 3 shows the anatomy: what a full clause contains, what the verbless version keeps, and what the reader has to supply.



Labelled diagram comparing a full clause with its verbless version, showing what is removed and what the reader must supply

The missing verb is not an absence. It is an instruction. It tells the reader to slow down, to picture, to connect — and different writers use it for different jobs. Figure 4 sorts the four effects you will meet most often.

What the missing verb makes the reader do

Four jobs writers give the verbless clause. Examples written for this book.

The effect	Example	What the reader supplies
Snapshot — zoom in on a detail	“Starting blocks. A rolled-up program in every hand.”	The scene: there they are. The eye moves fast.
Implied connection — say less, mean more	“A borrowed ute and a restless blue dog.”	The link to someone already named. Implication does the work of description.
Rhythm and suspense — a beat that stops	“The crowd went quiet. Then the gun.”	The action itself — the bang you supply is louder than the one you are told.
The lingering afterthought — what stays behind	“He left without a word. Not even a wave.”	The missing gesture, added after the event. It stays with you.

A verbless clause earns its place when the reader can complete it without strain — and the gap adds something.

Table of the four main effects of verbless clauses — snapshot, implied connection, rhythm and suspense, and the lingering afterthought — with an example written for this book in each row

Evaluation test: a verbless clause earns its place when the reader can complete it without strain and the gap adds something — speed, implication, texture, suspense. It fails when the reader cannot tell what is missing, and the sentence just reads as broken. The difference is whether the writer has given the reader enough to build the rest.

4. Opening with *and*, *but* and *so*: the conjunction opener

A **coordinating conjunction** is a small connecting word that joins equal things — words, phrases or clauses. English has seven: **and**, **but**, **or**, **nor**, **for**, **so**, **yet**. A handy way to recall them is the initial letters: *FANBOYS* — **f**or, **a**nd, **n**or, **b**ut, **o**r, **y**et, **s**o.

Somewhere along the way, many students are told never to begin a sentence with *and* or *but*. Writers ignore that rule constantly, and they do it on purpose: starting a sentence with a coordinating conjunction is a recognised way to create stylistic effect. Here is a story sentence written for this book:

And still she planned, one option after another.

The *and* at the front does quiet work: it tells the reader that the planning continued, steadily, from everything that came before. A full stop sits between the sentences, but the conjunction throws a bridge across it.

Each opener carries its own flavour when it stands at the front of a sentence. Figure 5 sets them out with original examples.

Opening with a coordinating conjunction

Seven small words, seven flavours of link. All examples written for this book.

Opener	The effect it carries	Original example
And	adds, and moves the story forward	"And the rain kept coming, hour after hour."
But	swerves against what came before	"But nobody had a better one."
Or	offers an alternative that reframes	"Or maybe the joke had been on him all along."
Nor	extends a negative	"Nor did he write."
For	gives a reason (a bookish flavour)	"For the door had been locked from the inside."
So	delivers a consequence as a verdict	"So the match ended where it began: level."
Yet	concedes a surprise	"Yet the light in the kitchen stayed on."

Table of the seven coordinating conjunctions used to open sentences, the effect each one carries, and an original example of each

Evaluation test: a conjunction opener works when you can feel the link it is making — the added beat of *and*, the swerve of *but*, the verdict of *so*. If you can delete the opener and nothing is lost, it is not doing its job. And because openers are emphatic, they flatten when overused: a page where every sentence begins with *and* has no peaks left to climb.

5. The three moves working together

No writer uses one structure at a time. Here is a paragraph written for this section, set at a school debate grand final, with all three moves in it. Each move is labelled with the writer's reason for choosing it.

One paragraph, three moves

A model paragraph (original) with every structure labelled with the writer's reason.



Passive voice



Verbless clause



Conjunction opener

The grand final **was held** in the library instead of the hall.

Nerves. Dry mouths.

A hush settled over the room.

And then our youngest speaker stood up.

But she did not open with the prepared line.

She opened with a question, and the judges leaned forward at once.

So the argument **was won** before the last rebuttal.

The writer's reasons

- 1 was held — reports the venue change without giving anyone credit or blame
- 2 Nerves. Dry mouths. — a snapshot of the whole room in two details
- 3 And then — carries the story forward into the moment
- 4 But — the swerve — the prepared line is refused
- 5 So ... was won — delivers the verdict; the focus stays on the result

Craft principle: the idea comes first, and the structure is chosen to serve it.

Annotated model paragraph about a school debate grand final, with the passive voice, verbless clauses and conjunction openers colour-coded and labelled with the writer's reasons

Read the paragraph aloud once, then read only the labelled parts. Notice the craft principle underneath all three moves: **the idea comes first, and the structure is chosen to serve it.** The writer did not want “a passive”; the writer wanted the decision about the venue reported without anyone taking credit or blame, and the passive is the structure that does that. Every time you draft, ask the same question in the same order: *what do I want the reader to notice — and which structure puts it there?*

6. Judging effectiveness: the three questions

Every *evaluate* task in this section runs on one checklist. When you judge a sentence structure, answer three questions in order:

1. **Focus** — What does this structure put in the spotlight? What does it push to the edge or drop from view entirely?
2. **Fit** — Does it suit the purpose, the audience and the context? (The passive belongs in a lab report. It can be the wrong choice in an apology.)

3. **Flow** — Does it help the text hold together and move? Does the beat it creates land, or does it stumble the reader?

Judging effectiveness: three questions

Ask them in order, every time you evaluate a sentence structure.

1

FOCUS

What does this structure put in the spotlight?

What does it push to the edge — or drop from view entirely?

2

FIT

Does it suit the purpose, the audience and the context?

(The passive belongs in a lab report. It can be the wrong choice in an apology.)

3

FLOW

Does it help the text hold together and move?

Does the beat it creates land, or does it stumble the reader?

Evaluation is the second sentence: “and it works because...” — or “and it fails because...” Naming the structure alone is only analysis.

Checklist of the three questions for judging a sentence structure: focus, fit and flow

A judgement that stops at naming the structure (“this is a passive”) is analysis, not evaluation. Evaluation is the second sentence: *and it works because...* — or *and it fails because...*

Worked examples

Example 1 — scaffolded

Task. Figure 8 is a short news brief written for this section. It is built almost entirely from passive clauses, and each one makes a choice about what the reader notices. The analysis table below is completed for you. Read it line by line, matching each quote to its structure and its effect.

Creek bridge closed after flood damage

Passive clauses are marked and numbered. All text written for this book.

The Wattle Creek bridge **was closed** ¹ on Tuesday after flood damage **was found** ² during a routine check. The bridge had **been inspected by council engineers** ³ the week before. Two detour routes **have been set up** ⁴ for commuters. A decision about repairs **has not yet been made.** ⁵

What each choice does

- 1** The bridge — the news itself — leads. Who closed it matters less than what is closed.
- 2** Focus stays on the danger, not on the person who spotted it.
- 3** The doer is kept: naming the experts reassures the reader.
- 4** Fronts what the reader will actually use — the detours.
- 5** Focus on the missing decision — but with no doer, there is nobody to chase.

Model text of an original news brief about a closed creek bridge, with the passive clauses highlighted and numbered

Quote from the brief	Structure	What it does
“the Wattle Creek bridge was closed on Tuesday”	passive, doer not named	The bridge — the thing every commuter needs to know about — is pushed into the spotlight. Who closed it (the council) matters less than what is closed.
“flood damage was found during a routine check”	passive, doer not named	Keeps the focus on the danger itself. The name of the person who spotted the damage would add nothing to the warning.
“The bridge had been inspected by council engineers the week before.”	passive with the doer kept (<i>by council engineers</i>)	Names the experts on purpose. The <i>by</i> -phrase adds authority and reassures the reader that qualified people are involved.
“Two detour routes have been set up for commuters”	passive, doer not named	Fronts what the reader will actually use — the detours — rather than the office that arranged them.
“A decision about repairs has not yet	passive, doer not named	Focuses the sentence on the missing

Quote from the brief	Structure	What it does
been made.”		decision. Notice the side effect: with no doer named, there is also nobody to chase for an answer.

The point to copy: each row of a good analysis does three things — it quotes the exact words, names the structure precisely (which passive, doer kept or dropped), and states the effect in terms of what the reader notices. The last row also shows evaluation beginning: naming what a structure does *and* what it quietly costs.

Example 2 — scaffolded

Task. Figure 9 is the opening of a short story written for this section. It uses verbless clauses and conjunction openers to build tension. The table glosses each marked structure.

A story opening, marked up

 **Verbless clause**

 **Conjunction opener**

All text written for this book.

The market at noon.
1

Baskets of mangoes stacked high.
2

A vendor arguing with a scale.
2

The smell of rain on warm concrete.
3

Nina moved through it all without seeing any of it.

The letter was in her bag, folded eight times.

And
4
now the gate stood in front of her.

But
5
her feet stopped on their own.

Not the words on the page. The door in front of her —
6

the door she had painted blue, eleven years ago.

What each marked structure does

- 1 Sets the scene like a camera. The reader arrives; nothing happens yet.
- 2 Snapshots. Details flick past like things seen while walking.
- 3 A smell cannot be filmed — the reader brings it from memory.
- 4 “And” carries the wandering scene forward to the arrival.
- 5 “But” swerves hard — everything that moved, stops.
- 6 Stripped focus. What is left out does the emphasising.

Model text of an original story opening set in a market, with the verbless clauses and conjunction openers highlighted and numbered

Marked structure	Name	What it does
“The market at noon.”	Verbless clause — sets a scene	Works like a camera establishing shot. With no verb, the reader simply arrives in the place; nothing happens yet, which is exactly the point.
“Baskets of mangoes stacked high.” / “A vendor arguing with a scale.”	Verbless clauses — snapshots	Details flick past like things seen while walking. The missing verbs keep the eye moving and the scene busy.
“The smell of rain on warm concrete.”	Verbless clause — sensory detail	A smell cannot be filmed; it has to be supplied by the reader. The verbless form hands that work over — you bring the smell from your own memory.
“And now the gate stood in front of her.”	Conjunction opener — <i>and</i>	The <i>and</i> throws a bridge from the wandering scene to the arrival. The journey and the gate feel like one continuous movement.
“But her feet stopped on their own.”	Conjunction opener — <i>but</i>	A hard swerve. Everything before moved forward; this sentence refuses to. The opener makes the stop feel sudden, even to Nina herself.
“Not the words on the page. The door in front of her —”	Verbless clauses — stripped focus	The passage narrows to one detail by removing everything else, including the verbs. What is left out does the emphasising: nothing matters except that door.

Notice the pattern: the verbless clauses do the *seeing*, and the conjunction openers do the *steering*. Between them they control the pace of the whole passage without a single adverb saying “suddenly” or “slowly”.

Example 3 — independent

Task. The figure below shows one event — a wallet found behind the school canteen — written four different ways. No scaffold is given.

One event, four sentences

The same finding, reported four ways. Same fact — not the same story.

Version 1

**Emad found the wallet
behind the canteen.**

active voice — the doer leads

Version 2

**The wallet was found by Emad
behind the canteen.**

passive voice — the doer is kept

Version 3

**The wallet was found
behind the canteen.**

passive voice — the doer is dropped

Version 4

**Behind the canteen.
A wallet in the mud.**

verbless clauses — the detail stands alone

Match each version to the place it belongs: a commendation, a news item, a lost-property record, the opening of a story. Then ask: what does each structure spotlight?

The same event, a wallet found behind the school canteen, written four different ways and colour-coded by structure

- Match each version to the text type it suits best: a commendation in the school newsletter, a news item, a lost-property record, the opening of a story.
- For each match, use the three questions — focus, fit, flow — to explain why that structure fits that purpose. Say what each version puts in the spotlight and what it pushes out of view.
- Write a fifth version of the same event in one sentence, aimed at the wallet's owner, and state which structure you chose and why.

Pointers to structure your answer:

- Start with a one-line claim: the four versions carry the same fact but not the same story.
- Give each version one sentence of reasoning that names the structure.
- For part (c), name the reader first — the owner wants something specific — then pick the structure that delivers it.

A model opening, to show the shape — finish it yourself:

All four versions report one finding, but each one points the reader somewhere different. Version 1 puts the finder first, because...

Practice questions

Scaffolded

Q1. For each sentence, state whether it is active or passive, and name the agent (the doer of the action). If the agent is not in the sentence, write *not named*.

- (a) The librarian moved the return shelf.
- (b) The results were posted before lunch.
- (c) Someone has painted the goal posts.
- (d) The award will be presented by the captain.
- (e) My homework was eaten.

Q2. Rewrite each sentence as instructed, keeping the meaning.

- (a) Change to passive, keeping the doer: “The council closed the pool for repairs.”
- (b) Change to passive, dropping the doer: “A dog dug up the cricket pitch.”
- (c) Change to active: “The song was sung by the whole grandstand.”
- (d) For (a) and (b), state one purpose each rewrite might serve.

Q3. Here are three passive sentences. Each one uses the passive for a different reason from Figure 2: *the receiver matters most*, *the doer is unknown*, or *the doer is kept out of sight*. Sort them, and for the third kind, say who might be missing.

- (a) Three houses were evacuated before the storm hit.
- (b) The trophy has been stolen.
- (c) Fees will be increased next term.

Q4. Each item below contains a verbless clause. Underline or quote it, then state what the reader has to supply — a doing, a being, a connection.

- (a) The house at the end of the street. Lights on. No car.
- (b) She opened the exam paper. Three hours. No notes. No talking.
- (c) He finally scored. Arms up. The whole bench on its feet.

Q5. Each sentence below opens with a coordinating conjunction. Name the conjunction, then say what it does in that position, using the effects in Figure 5 (adds and moves forward; swerves; delivers a verdict; offers an alternative; extends a negative; gives a reason; concedes a surprise).

- (a) The plan was risky. But nobody had a better one.
- (b) So the match ended where it began: level.
- (c) He did not call. Nor did he write.
- (d) And the rain kept coming, hour after hour.

Q6. Read the passage below, then answer the questions.

The last lap

The final had been moved to Thursday because of the heat warning. Starting blocks. A rolled-up program in every hand. The crowd went quiet. Then the gun.

Mia led the first bend. But her legs felt heavy on the straight, so she fixed her eyes on the line and counted strides instead. One. Another. With ten metres to go, the roar of the grandstand rose around her. The race was hers. And she did not hear a thing until someone put a medal in her hand.

- (a) Find one passive voice in the passage. Is the doer named? What does the choice put in the spotlight?
- (b) Find two verbless clauses. For each, say what the reader supplies.
- (c) Find two conjunction openers. Name each conjunction and its effect.
- (d) Which one structure in the passage do you judge the most effective? Give your reason using focus, fit and flow.

Q7. Here is a flat paragraph about a school fete. It is correct and completely dull.

On Saturday, our school held its fete. The cake stall had long lines. Students sold many raffle tickets. A parent won the grand prize. At the end of the day, the organisers thanked everyone.

Rewrite it as a lively paragraph of five to seven sentences. Your rewrite must include:

- (a) one passive voice that puts the right thing in the spotlight (decide what that thing is);
- (b) one verbless clause that gives the reader a detail to picture;
- (c) one conjunction opener that adds momentum or a swerve.

Under each new structure, write one clause saying why you chose it.

Q8. (*Speaking and listening.*) Work with a partner. Here are two versions of the same incident report, both written after paint was spilled on the library carpet.

Version X: “Two students spilled paint on the library carpet during period four. They cleaned most of it before the bell.” Version Y: “Paint was spilled on the library carpet during period four. Most of it was cleaned before the bell.”

Discuss: Which version feels more honest? Which would you rather receive if you were the librarian? Which would you rather write if you were the person responsible? Use the three questions — focus, fit, flow — and come to one shared judgement you can give the class. Protocol: each person speaks first on one question; build on your partner’s points (“I agree, and I would add...”); disagree with reasons, not with voices raised.

Independent

Q9. Look again at the story opening in Figure 9. Write a paragraph of six to eight sentences answering:

How does the passage use sentence structure to build tension?

Structure your paragraph with a claim, at least two quotes from the passage, and an effect sentence after each quote. The model paragraph in the fully-worked solutions is colour-coded in Figure 11 so you can see the shape before you write.

The shape of an analytical paragraph

A model response (original), colour-coded by the job each part does.

CLAIM

QUOTE

EFFECT

LINK

CLAIM

The passage builds tension by controlling what the reader is allowed to see, one sentence structure at a time.

QUOTE

"The market at noon. Baskets of mangoes stacked high."

EFFECT

holds the reader in a scene where nothing happens yet — the waiting itself becomes the point.

QUOTE

"And now the gate stood in front of her." "But her feet stopped on their own."

EFFECT

the openers steer the pace — "and" carries her forward, "but" stops everything.

QUOTE

"Not the words on the page. The door in front of her"

EFFECT

the missing verb makes the reader supply the recognition Nina cannot yet say.

LINK

Structure, not description, is what makes the heart beat faster here.

Claim first. Quote, then say what the quote DOES. Close by linking back to the question.

Model analytical paragraph colour-coded to show the claim, the quotes, the effect sentences and the closing link

Q10. Read this statement, released by a sports club after its annual dinner fell through.

Statement from the Westside Club

“The annual dinner has been cancelled. Unfortunately, mistakes were made with the booking, and several members were not told in time. All tickets will be refunded by the end of the month. The committee is sorry for the frustration caused.”

- (a) Identify every passive voice in the statement and say whether the doer is named.
- (b) Evaluate the statement using the three questions. In particular: who is missing from “mistakes were made”, and what does that absence do to the apology?
- (c) Rewrite the statement so the club takes responsibility in plain, active sentences. Keep the same facts. Then write two sentences justifying your biggest change.

Q11. Write a crafted paragraph of six to ten sentences on this stimulus — or one of your own choosing:

The last minute of a tied grand final.

Your paragraph must use all three structures from this section — at least one passive voice, one verbless clause and one conjunction opener — each chosen for a reason. After the paragraph, write one sentence of intent for each structure: what you wanted the reader to notice, and why that structure puts it there.

Q12. (*Speaking and listening.*) In groups of three or four, run an editing session. Take the flat fete paragraph from Q7 and the best rewrite your group can produce (build one together if you have not finished Q7). Read both versions aloud — one reader per version, same pace. Then apply the three questions to each version and agree on a single group judgement: which version is more effective, and on which of the three questions does the decision turn? Each group reports its judgement and its single strongest reason. Listeners: note whether the group’s reason actually names a structure and an effect, or only a feeling.

Q13. Consider this claim:

“The passive voice is the structure of evasion.”

Write a reasoned response. You must:

- give the strongest version of the case *for* the claim — what its defenders would actually say;
- give the strongest version of the case *against* it — what its critics would actually say;
- then state your own position: is the passive itself evasive, or only some uses of it — and what separates one from the other?

Use the definitions of *passive voice*, *agent* and *effective* given in this section. You are marked on the quality of your reasoning — defined terms, real examples, honest limits — not on which side you land on. Whichever side you favour, spend equal effort on the other one.

Q14. Over one week, collect three passive voices and one verbless clause or conjunction opener from texts you actually meet — a news app, a science report in another subject, a school notice, a game review, a post from a club you follow. For each find, record:

- the sentence, word for word, and where it came from;
- for passives: is the doer named? If not, who is missing?
- your judgement, in one or two sentences: does the structure fit its purpose, using focus, fit and flow?

Bring your finds to class ready to defend one judgement. If a find turns out to be active voice or a full clause after all, keep it anyway and say how you tested it.

Answers

These are sample answers. For open questions, any response that meets the task is acceptable.

Q1. (a) active — the librarian; (b) passive — not named; (c) active — someone; (d) passive — the captain; (e) passive — not named.

Q2. (a) “The pool was closed for repairs by the council.” (b) “The cricket pitch was dug up.” (c) “The whole grandstand sang the song.” (d) Samples: (a) keeps the council’s authority visible, which suits an official notice; (b) keeps attention on the pitch itself, which suits a report where who dug it is beside the point.

Q3. (a) the receiver matters most — the houses and the people in them are the news; (b) the doer is unknown — whoever took the trophy is missing; (c) the doer is kept out of sight — the people who set the fees (the school council, the committee) are not named, and the sentence lets nobody be asked.

Q4. (a) “Lights on. No car.” — the reader supplies a being: *the lights were on, there was no car*. (b) “Three hours. No notes. No talking.” — the reader supplies rules and conditions: *you have three hours, notes are not allowed, talking is not allowed*. (c) “Arms up. The whole bench on its feet.” — the reader supplies doings: *players threw their arms up, the bench stood*.

Q5. (a) *But* — swerves: the risk is conceded, then the lack of choice turns the sentence. (b) *So* — delivers a verdict: the result lands as a consequence of everything before. (c) *Nor* — extends a negative: the second absence piles on the first. (d) *And* — adds and moves forward: the rain’s persistence feels continuous and wearing.

Q6. (a) Sample: “The final had been moved to Thursday” — doer not named; puts the changed arrangement in the spotlight, which is all the athletes need to know. Do not accept “The race was hers”: *was* is there a linking verb and *hers* its complement, so that clause is not a passive. (b) Any two of: “Starting blocks.” (the reader supplies *there were*); “A rolled-up program in every hand.” (*there was*); “Then the gun.” (*went off / fired*); “One. Another.” (*she took one stride, then another*). (c) The two openers: “But her legs felt heavy...” — *but* swerves from leading to struggling; “And she did not hear a thing...” — *and* carries the story forward past the finish into the numb moment after. (The *so* in “so she fixed her eyes...” joins two clauses inside one sentence — ordinary coordination, not an opener.) (d) Open to judgement; reward a named structure plus reasoning across focus, fit and flow — for example, “Then the gun.” as the most effective because the missing verb makes the reader supply the bang, which is more sudden than any description (focus), it suits a race report at the start of the race (fit), and it cuts the sentence to the shortest beat in the passage (flow).

Q7. See the fully-worked solutions for one model rewrite. Reward one purposeful passive, one easy-to-picture verbless clause, one opener that adds momentum or a swerve, and a reason under each.

Q8. Teacher observation of the pair judgement. Look for: students noticing that Version X names the doers and Version Y removes them; a judgement about honesty that names what each version does to responsibility; use of the words *focus*, *fit* or *flow*. A strong pair notices the uncomfortable middle: the person responsible might prefer Y, while the librarian deserves X — and that the same structure serves the two parties differently.

Q9. See the fully-worked solutions and Figure 11. A sound paragraph makes a claim about how structure controls pace or attention, quotes at least two structures from the passage, and gives each quote an effect sentence.

Q10. (a) “has been cancelled” — doer not named; “mistakes were made” — doer not named; “members were not told” — doer not named; “will be refunded” — doer not named. (b) Sample: the statement focuses the reader on events, not people, and every sentence that needs an owner lacks one; the apology is aimed at “frustration” — a feeling — rather than at what the club did. The effect is a text that reports a disaster that happened to nobody, by nobody. (c) See the fully-worked solutions for one model rewrite. Reward active sentences with the club or the committee as the subject, the same facts kept, and two sentences of justification.

Q11. See the fully-worked solutions for a model paragraph and intent statements. Reward all three structures present, each with a reason that names what the reader is meant to notice.

Q12. Teacher observation. Look for: both versions read aloud at the same pace; a group judgement that names at least one structure and its effect (“the verbless clause gives you the smell of the sausage stall, and the flat version never does”), not only a preference; listeners checking whether the reason names a structure.

Q13. Marked on reasoning, not conclusion. A strong response defines its terms (passive voice, agent, effective); gives the case for the claim in real strength (institutions use the passive to report actions without owners; “mistakes were made” has no responsible person inside it); gives the case against in real strength (the passive is the ordinary voice of science and of news; when the doer is unknown, naming one would be wrong, not honest); then takes a position with a test — for example, the passive is evasive only when the omitted agent is one the reader has a right to know. Responses that attack only one side, or conclude without reasons, score low whichever side they pick.

Q14. Answers will vary. Reward three real passives and one verbless clause or opener, each with source, doer check (for passives) and a judgement using focus, fit or flow. A find that is corrected honestly after testing (“I thought this was passive, but the subject does the doing, so it is active”) is worth full marks for that item.

Fully-worked solutions

Q2 — reasoning. (a) and (b) show the same two choices every passive presents: keep the doer in a *by*-phrase, or drop it. Keeping it suits texts where authority should be visible (the council closed the pool — that is their job and their call). Dropping it suits texts where the receiver is the story (the pitch is ruined; who dug it is a separate question). Part (c) simply runs the swap backwards: the *by*-phrase tells you who to make the subject.

Q6(d) — a model judgement. The most effective structure in the passage is the verbless clause “Then the gun.” All race writing leans on the start as the moment everything changes, and this version hands the moment to the reader half-finished: no verb, no *bang*, just the word *gun* standing alone where a full sentence should be. The reader supplies the noise, and a noise you supply for yourself is louder than one you are told about. It also fits its purpose — a race report moves fastest at the start — and its flow: it is the shortest beat in the passage, and the sentences lengthen again once Mia is running, which is the race’s own rhythm.

Q7 — model rewrite.

On Saturday, the fete was opened by our youngest students, which felt right: the day belonged to them. Long lines at the cake stall. The smell of sausage on the air. Raffle tickets sold so fast that the jar ran out twice. And the grand prize went home with a parent who had come “just to watch”. By the end of the day, the organisers had thanked everyone twice.

Passive 1 (“was opened by our youngest students”) keeps the doer because the doer is the point — the opening is an honour. Verbless clauses (“Long lines at the cake stall. The smell of sausage on the air.”) give the reader two details to picture, with no verbs slowing the eye. Opener (“And the grand prize went home...”) starts its sentence and carries the day forward to its small, warm ending.

Q9 — model analytical paragraph (this is the paragraph colour-coded in Figure 11).

The passage builds tension by controlling what the reader is allowed to see, one sentence structure at a time. The verbless clauses of the opening — “The market at noon. Baskets of mangoes stacked high.” — hold the reader in a scene where nothing happens yet, so the waiting itself becomes the point. Then the conjunction openers take over the pace: “And now the gate stood in front of her” carries Nina forward without a pause, while “But her feet stopped on their own” swerves hard. The swerve lands because the *and*-sentence promised movement. Finally the passage strips detail to a single object — “Not the words on the page. The door in front of her” — and the missing verbs force the reader to supply the recognition Nina cannot yet say out loud. Structure, not description, is what makes the heart beat faster here.

The claim is underlined by three quoted structures, each followed by an effect sentence naming what the structure makes the reader do (wait, move, swerve, supply). The closing sentence links the evidence back to the question.

Q10(c) — model rewrite.

Statement from the Westside Club

“We have cancelled the annual dinner. Our booking team made two mistakes with the venue, and we failed to tell several members in time. We will refund all tickets by the end of the month, and the committee apologises to every member we let down.”

The biggest change is “mistakes were made” becoming “Our booking team made two mistakes”. The original reports an error with no owner, which reads as the club standing behind the event rather than beside it; the rewrite gives the mistakes a subject, because an apology without a doer is hard to believe. The second key change moves “the frustration” — a feeling — into “every member we let down”: the club apologises to people, not to a mood.

Q11 — model paragraph and intent statements.

The grand final was level with one minute left. The whistle. The roar. Every eye on the centre square, and the ball rose into the air like it had all day to decide. But our captain read it first. She took the mark in a pocket of quiet, so the kick that followed sounded enormous. The game was won by ten points, though nobody remembered the margin — only the moment the ball left her boot.

Intent: the passive “was won” frames the game itself as the subject, because the paragraph is about the match, not the players. (The opening “was level” is a linking verb plus its complement, not a passive.) The verbless clauses (“The whistle. The roar.”) strip the moment to sound alone, so the reader hears what the crowd heard. The opener does the steering — *but* opens its sentence and swerves to the captain; the *and* and *so* inside sentences are ordinary joins between clauses, not openers.

Q13 — model structure.

For: The passive is the structure of evasion because it is the only common English structure that lets a writer report an action and remove the actor in the same move. Institutions know this and use it: “the fee was raised”, “mistakes were made”, “members were not told” — every sentence is true, and no person stands inside any of them. Where the doer matters to the reader, choosing a structure that hides the doer is not style; it is dodge-work.

Against: The claim confuses one use with the whole structure. The passive is the ordinary voice of science writing (“the sample was cooled”), of accident reporting (“two people were injured”) and of daily speech (“my bike was stolen”). In each case the doer is unknown or beside the point, and naming one would clutter the sentence or accuse the wrong person. Evasion needs something to evade; where there is nothing to hide, the passive is simply accuracy.

Position (sample): The passive is not evasive by nature — it is evasive by context. The test is the missing agent: when the doer is unknown or irrelevant, the passive reports honestly; when the doer is known and the reader has a right to know them, the same structure becomes a way of standing nobody up next to the action. The structure is a spotlight, and a spotlight pointed away from the doer is only dishonest when the doer is what we needed to see.

Note that the model takes a position — yours may differ, and a well-reasoned opposite position scores equally. What is marked: defined terms, both sides at full strength, a position with a test, and honest limits.

Q12 — what a strong group judgement contains.

- A clear verdict on which version is more effective, stated in one sentence.
 - The question the decision turned on — usually *focus* (what each version spotlights) or *fit* (which suits a newsletter versus a report).
 - At least one named structure with an effect: “the verbless clause hands you the smell of the sausage stall; the flat version lists facts without pictures.”
 - A fair word for the losing version: the flat paragraph is clear and complete, which is why it would survive in a formal record even if it never moves a reader.
-

Section 2A · English 10 · Curriculum reference: VC2E10LA05, drawing on VC2E10LA05.E01, VC2E10LA05.E02 and VC2E10LA05.E03. Builds on VC2E9LA05 (Level 9). All news briefs, story passages, statements, speeches and dialogues in this section were written for this book.

Syntax: how clause combinations build meaning and style

Curriculum trace. Victorian Curriculum 2.0 English, Level 10 · Language strand · sub-strand *Language for expressing and developing ideas* · **VC2E10LA06** · Draws on: VC2E10LA06.E01, .E02, .E03 · Builds on Level 9 VC2E9LA06

Two terms, defined up front

The Victorian Curriculum uses the words *syntax* and *style* without defining either. Other definitions exist and are not interchangeable with the ones used here, so this section states its own. In this section:

- **syntax** means the arrangement of words into phrases, clauses and sentences, and the choices a writer makes in that arrangement;
- **style** means the patterned run of those choices across a whole text — in this section, above all, the pattern of clause choices.

Every task in this section is answerable on those two definitions alone, and the same honesty applies to the grammar words: each is defined the first time it appears.

Theory

1. The clause-combining toolkit

A **clause** is a group of words built around a verb. A **main clause** can stand alone as a sentence; a **subordinate clause** cannot — it leans on a main clause, and it is usually hooked on by a **connective** (a linking word such as *because*, *although*, *if*). You have been combining clauses for years. What Level 10 adds is the analyst's question: *what kind of link is this clause building, and why here?*

The clause-combining toolkit: five logical relations

A subordinate clause hooks onto a main clause and tells the reader what KIND of link joins two ideas.

Relation	What it signals	Common connectives	Original example
Cause	why something happens	because, since, as, given that	Because the tide came in fast, the crew pulled in the nets early.
Result	what follows from something	so ... that, such ... that, so	The leak spread so fast that the whole floor was closed.
Manner	how something is done	as if, as though, the way	She spoke as if the decision had already been made.
Concession	a contrast against expectation	although, though, even though, while	Although the hall was half empty, the band played every song in full.
Condition	what must hold first	if, unless, provided that	Unless the rain stops by noon, the match will move indoors.

Time and purpose work the same way (when, before, after, so that ...). The connective is the signal; the clause order is a second choice the writer makes.

A table listing five logical relations — cause, result, manner, concession, condition — with their connectives and an original example sentence for each

Combining a main clause with a subordinate clause is how a writer builds a **logical relation** between two ideas. Five relations do most of the work:

- **Cause** answers *why*: *Because the tide came in fast, the crew pulled in the nets early.*
- **Result** answers *what followed*: *The leak spread so fast that the whole floor was closed.*
- **Manner** answers *how*: *She spoke as if the decision had already been made.*
- **Concession** answers *what holds true against expectation*: *Although the hall was half empty, the band played every song in full.* A concession clause admits one idea so that the main clause can outweigh it.
- **Condition** answers *what must hold first*: *Unless the rain stops by noon, the match will move indoors.*

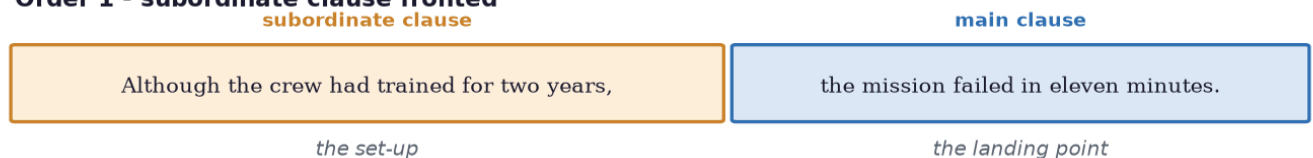
The elaboration behind this table (VC2E10LA06.E02) leaves the list open — time (*when, before*) and purpose (*so that*) work the same way. One model sentence is worth studying once, as a picture of the move: “*Although few critics praised the poet while she lived, her reputation grew steadily after her death.*” The connective *although* does not just join two facts; it tells the reader how to weigh them — the second idea is meant to outweigh the first.

2. Order and emphasis

The connective names the relation; the **order** of the clauses is a second choice, and it changes the experience of the sentence. Putting a subordinate clause at the front is called **fronting**: the fronted clause sets the frame, and the main clause that follows lands as the point.

Clause order is a meaning choice

Order 1 - subordinate clause fronted



The set-up leads, so the failure lands last, as the point of the sentence. The training reads as the frame the writer wants us to hold.

Order 2 - main clause fronted



The failure leads and lands mid-sentence; the training trails as added information. The same facts - a different experience of them.

Same two ideas. Same connective. Different weight. Where a writer places a clause is part of what the sentence means.

Two versions of the same sentence as coloured clause blocks, showing that fronting the subordinate clause makes the main clause the landing point, while fronting the main clause lets the concession trail off as added information

Same two ideas, same connective, different weight. Where a writer places a clause is part of what the sentence means — which is exactly why syntax is not decoration.

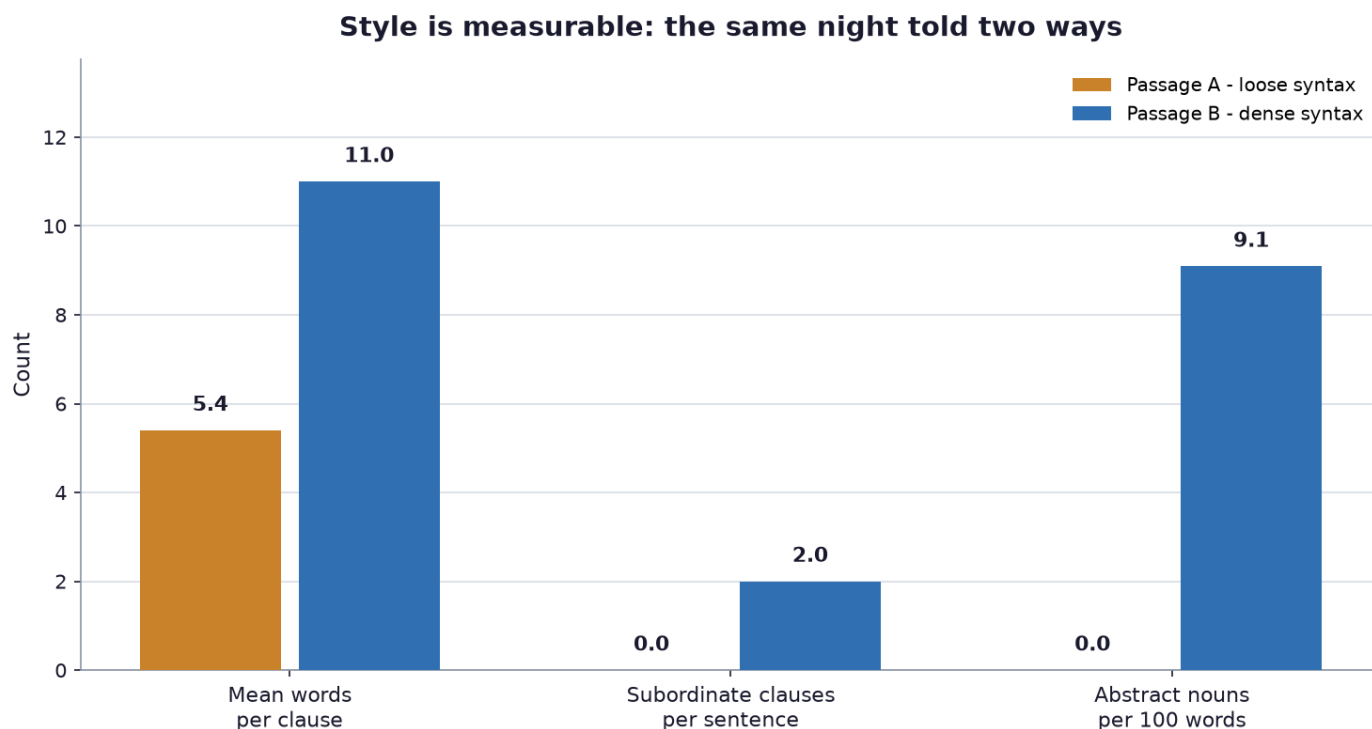
3. The same night told two ways

Read the two passages below. They report the same night.

Passage A. The storm hit just after midnight. The river rose fast. Water crossed the main road. Three families left their homes. They waited in the hall until morning.

Passage B. Although forecasters had warned of heavy rain for days, the speed of the storm's arrival caught the town off guard, and the crossing of the main road by the rising river forced the evacuation of three families, who spent the night in the hall.

Passage A is five short main clauses: one step per sentence, a quick pace, a story being told scene by scene. Passage B is one long sentence: two subordinate clauses (the *although* clause and the *who* clause) folded around two main clauses, and the pace slows to something measured and report-like. Style is not a feeling you guess at; it is made of countable choices like these.



A bar chart comparing the two passages on three counts computed from the printed texts: mean words per clause (5.4 against 11.0), subordinate clauses per sentence (0 against 2), and abstract nouns per hundred words (0 against 9.1)

The counts in that chart are computed from the passages as printed: Passage A averages 5.4 words per clause with no subordinate clauses; Passage B averages 11.0 words per clause with two subordinate clauses in its single sentence, and four abstract nouns — *speed*, *arrival*, *crossing*, *evacuation* — where Passage A has none. An **abstract noun** names an idea, quality or process you cannot point to (compare *storm*, a thing you can point to, with *evacuation*, a process packaged as a thing). Which passage would open a novel, and which would sit in a news report? The answer comes from the syntax, not the topic — and being able to say *why* is the skill this section builds.

4. Nominalisation: packaging a process as a thing

Nominalisation is the making of a **noun group** — a group of words built around a noun — out of a process (a verb) or a quality (an adjective); to **nominalise** a word is to give it that treatment: *closed* becomes *the closure*, *decided* becomes *the decision*, *evacuated* becomes *the evacuation*. You met the building block in Level 9, where abstract nouns summarise ideas in text. Level 10 asks what the packaging *does*.

Nominalisation: packaging a process as a thing

A nominalisation turns a process (a verb) or a quality (an adjective) into a noun group.

1 Clause form - the process is a verb

The council closed the library.

who acted is in plain sight

agent: the council process: closed affected: the library

2 Nominalised - the agent is gone

The closure of the library followed budget cuts.

the syntax decides not to say

process packaged as noun: closure agent: not said affected: of the library

3 Nominalised - the agent is kept

The council's closure of the library followed budget cuts.

packaging with the actor named

agent kept as possessor: the council's process: closure affected: of the library

Each version makes some information easy to see and other information hard to recover.

That is not a flaw in the grammar. It is the grammar doing meaning work:
the choice of form is a choice about what to put in the light.

Three boxed versions of one event: the clause “The council closed the library” with its agent in plain sight; the nominalised form “the closure of the library” with the agent unsaid; and “the council’s closure of the library” with the actor kept as possessor

The curriculum’s first elaboration (VC2E10LA06.E01) puts its finger on the point: nominalisation changes how an event gets built into a sentence — one piece of the information is pushed forward, another fades back. Look again at the three boxes. The clause form makes the actor plain. The nominalised form packages the event so it can be discussed as a thing — *the closure followed budget cuts* — but the grammar now leaves unsaid who closed anything. The third version keeps the packaging *and* the actor. All three are correct English; they are not the same meaning.

Two positions, both worth their strongest form.

Position 1 — the plain-style case. In his 1946 essay *Politics and the English Language*, George Orwell argued that writers who package actions as abstract things can blur who did what, and that this blurring lets responsibility disappear from a sentence. In its strongest form, this position says: when the grammar hides the agent, ask *whose benefit does the hiding serve?*

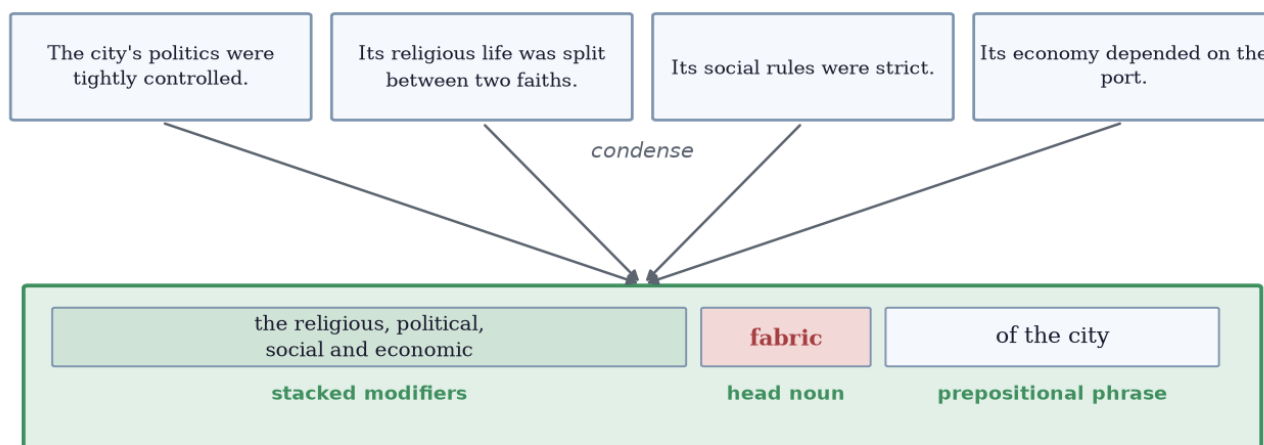
Position 2 — the condensing case. In systemic functional linguistics — the study of how grammar makes meaning, associated with M. A. K. Halliday’s *An Introduction to Functional Grammar* (1985) — nominalisation is described as the engine of technical and analytical writing: it condenses a process into a thing a text can then define, compare, count and argue about. In its strongest form, this position says: without the packaging, science, law and analysis could not build on their own earlier sentences.

Both positions are right about a real risk and a real resource. The analyst’s job is not to pick a side but to test each one on the same sentence — and to notice which one a given text invites. (No text is quoted from either source; the positions are summarised and attributed.)

5. Abstraction in a noun group: one package, many ideas

Nominalisation packages one process; a dense **noun group** can package a whole picture. A noun group is built around its **head noun** — the word the group is about — and the words stacked before and after it are its **modifiers**. Take a sentence written for this book: “*Her study covered the religious, political, social and economic fabric of the city.*” (VC2E10LA06.E03 names this move.) Four adjectives, each standing for a sentence’s worth of description, are stacked in front of one head noun.

Abstraction in a noun group: four clauses become one package



One noun group now stands for four sentences' worth of description. The writer can hold the whole idea up and discuss it as a single thing:

"This fabric, woven over a century, unravelled in a single decade."

That is generalisation: abstraction lets one sentence carry a whole picture at once - and lets later sentences act on it.

Four short descriptive clauses at the top with arrows condensing into one green box containing a single noun group shown in three labelled parts: the stacked modifiers "the religious, political, social and economic", the head noun "fabric", and the prepositional phrase "of the city"

Abstraction in a noun group is this packing: concrete descriptions are traded for a general idea that a sentence can hold up and act on. Once the picture is one thing, the writer can do things with it — judge it, date it, weigh it: "*This fabric, woven over a century, unravelled in a single decade.*" That is **generalisation**, and it is how analytical and academic writing carries complex ideas without restating them every sentence.

One caution makes you a better analyst of it: the denser the group, the more the reader must trust the writer. If a text keeps handing you packed abstractions — *the process, the transition, the outcome* — a fair question is what the packing leaves unsaid, and who benefits if you do not ask.

6. One event, three syntaxes

The same event can be told with loose clauses, with nominalisation, or with the affected people fronted. Each form spotlights something and pushes something else back.

One event, three syntaxes - three experiences for the reader

The facts do not change. The syntax does - and with it, the meaning.

Form	Version (original)	What the syntax spotlights	What it pushes back
Clause sequence	The storm hit just after midnight, and the river rose fast, so water crossed the main road and three families left their homes.	Events unfold in order; the causes stay visible, step by step.	Nothing is packaged, so the reader walks every step. The pace is quick.
Nominalised	The flooding of the main road forced the evacuation of three families.	The outcome leads; the tone is calm and report-like.	The storm and the rising river drop out of the grammar. Fewer actors are visible.
Affected parties fronted	Three families were forced from their homes when the river, swollen by the overnight storm, crossed the main road.	The families' situation lands first; sympathy is aimed at them.	The storm sits inside a subordinate clause, folded into background detail.

Ask of any sentence: what does this word order put in the light, and what does it leave in the shade?

A table showing one storm event written three ways — a clause sequence, a nominalised report form, and a version with the affected families fronted — with columns for what each form spotlights and what it pushes back

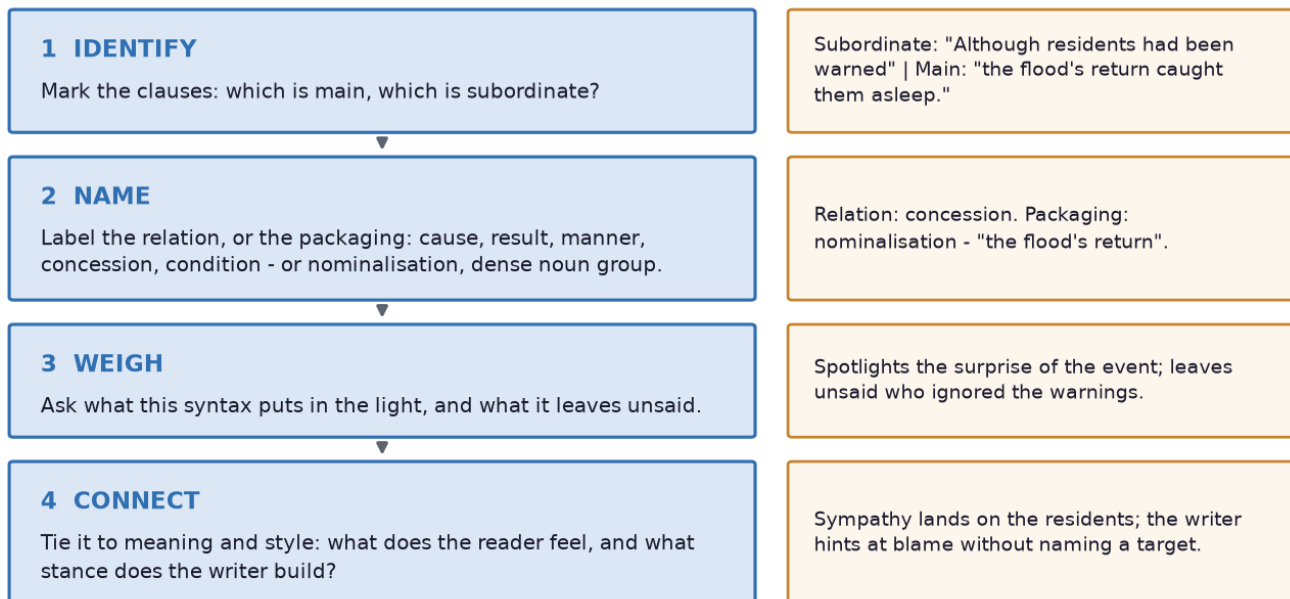
This is the heart of the content description in one table: the facts stay put while the syntax moves the reader's attention, and that moving is meaning. The habit to build is the question at the bottom of the figure — *what does this word order put in the light, and what does it leave in the shade?* — asked of any sentence that matters.

7. A routine for analysis

Analysis of syntax is a routine before it is a talent. Four steps, in order, every time:

A routine for analysing syntax

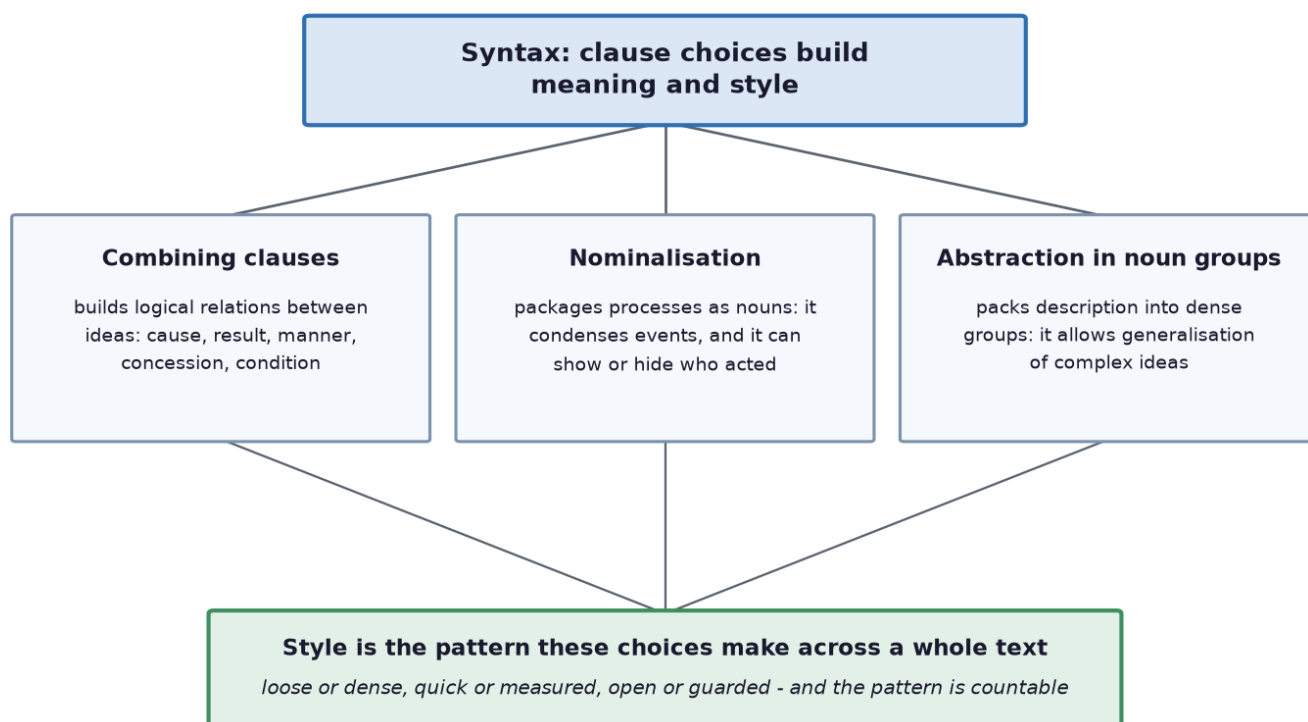
Sentence carried through the steps: "Although residents had been warned, the flood's return caught them asleep." (original)



A four-step flowchart — identify the clauses, name the relation or packaging, weigh what is spotlighted and what is left unsaid, connect the choice to meaning and style — with one original sentence built on a concession worked through all four steps in side boxes

Worked on the sentence printed in the figure, the routine produces a complete analysis in four moves: the clauses are identified, the concession and the nominalisation are named, the weighing notices that the surprise is spotlighted while the question of who ignored the warnings is left unsaid, and the connect step ties it to meaning — sympathy lands on the residents, and the writer's critical stance is built without a single word of open blame. Use the routine in the worked analyses below and in every practice task.

8. The section map



A concept map with the central claim “Syntax: clause choices build meaning and style”, three branches for combining clauses, nominalisation and abstraction in noun groups, and a base node stating that style is the pattern these choices make across a whole text

Worked analyses

Worked analysis 1 — scaffolded (relations and order)

Analyse: “Although the council had promised a repair, the bridge stayed closed, so traders lost a season of sales.”

Step	Analysis	Why it matters
Identify	Subordinate clause: <i>Although the council had promised a repair</i> . Main clauses: <i>the bridge stayed closed</i> and <i>traders lost a season of sales</i> , joined by <i>so</i> .	Three clauses, two joins: the skeleton of the sentence.
Name	Fronted join: concession. Second join: result.	The promise is admitted so it can be outweighed; the loss is tied to the closure as cause to effect.
Weigh	The broken promise opens the sentence as the frame; the traders’ loss lands last, as the point.	Order tells the reader what to hold and what to land on.
Connect	The syntax criticises the council without ever writing “the council failed”.	The evaluation is carried by grammar, not by open comment — a quieter, stronger stance.

Worked analysis 2 — scaffolded (nominalisation)

Two clauses: “Someone leaked the report. The minister resigned within hours.” One nominalised rewrite: “The leaking of the report forced the resignation of the minister within hours.”

Change	What the syntax now does
<i>leaked</i> becomes <i>the leaking</i> ; <i>resigned</i> becomes <i>the resignation</i>	Two processes are now things the sentence can connect — packaging.
<i>Someone</i> disappears	The leaker is no longer in the grammar. The sentence does not say “we do not know who”; it simply does not ask.
<i>forced</i> appears	The clause version only placed two events in time order; the rewrite asserts a causal link between them. The syntax makes the cause more explicit at the same moment it makes the agent less so.
The tone settles	Two short, urgent clauses become one calm report sentence. Pace and stance both shift.

That last row is VC2E10LA06.E01 in action: some information (the cause) becomes more explicit; other information (the actor) becomes harder to recover. Neither version is dishonest by itself. A pattern of hiding is a different matter — which is exactly what Position 1 in the box above trains you to spot.

Worked analysis 3 — unscaffolded (unpacking a dense noun group)

Analyse: “*The documentary traced the slow economic, legal and cultural absorption of the valley into the city’s orbit.*”

Unpack. The noun group *the slow economic, legal and cultural absorption of the valley into the city’s orbit* holds at least three clauses’ worth of description: *the valley’s economy was drawn into the city’s; its legal life was drawn in; its culture was drawn in; and the drawing-in was slow.* **Name.** That is abstraction in a noun group: four modifiers and two phrases stacked around the head noun *absorption*. **Weigh.** The packing makes the whole process one thing, so the sentence can *trace* it — give it a shape, a speed (*slow*), a span. What it asks of the reader is trust: the mechanics of the absorption are not shown, only named. **Connect.** The style is academic and measured; the generalisation is the point, and a reader who wants the mechanics is being told to look somewhere else. The sentence is doing its job — provided the documentary later earns the trust it asks for here.

Worked analysis 4 — unscaffolded (comparing two tellings)

Same content, two tellings.

Version 1. The appeal was heard on Tuesday. The judges gave no decision that day. The families waited outside.

Version 2. The hearing of the appeal on Tuesday, with no decision given, lengthened the families’ wait outside the court.

Version 1: three main clauses, three camera angles, a quick pace; the families are one shot among three. Version 2: one sentence, three nominalisations (*the hearing* and *no decision given* folded into the subject, *the families’ wait* promoted to the object the sentence is about) — *lengthened* acts on *the wait*, so the wait becomes the story. The relation between hearing and waiting, which Version 1 leaves the reader to infer from order alone, Version 2 states outright. Neither is better English; they are different instruments, and a writer chooses between them the way a camera operator chooses between three quick cuts and one long shot.

Practice questions

Scaffolded

Q1 (Reading and viewing). Name the logical relation built by the subordinate clause in each sentence.

(a) *Because the ferry was out of service, the village ran its own shuttle.* (b) *The argument was so tangled that nobody could find the point.* (c) *If the budget passes, the pool reopens in spring.* (d) *While the home team led at half time, the visitors finished stronger.* (e) *He moved through the kitchen as if he had worked there for years.*

Q2 (Reading and viewing). In each sentence, copy the subordinate clause and state whether it is fronted or placed at the end. Then say in one line what the order does.

(a) *Although the tide turned at dawn, the search continued all day.* **(b)** *The search continued all day although the tide turned at dawn.* **(c)** *Unless the fog lifts, the climb is off.*

Q3 (Writing). These facts: *The river froze. The mail could not fly in.* Using a connective of your choice, write the pair as one sentence showing **(a)** cause, **(b)** concession (the mail still went through, by dog sled), **(c)** condition. Then circle the version whose emphasis you prefer and say in one line why.

Q4 (Writing). Rewrite the process in each sentence as a noun group — nominalise it — keeping the actor where the example keeps it: *The council decided* → *the council's decision*.

(a) *The bridge collapsed.* → ? **(b)** *The company built a new depot.* → ? **(c)** *The team discovered the fault.* → ?

Q5 (Reading and viewing). *The closure of the library followed budget cuts.* Who closed the library? State what this sentence makes explicit and what it leaves unsaid, one line each.

Q6 (Writing). Rewrite these two sentences as one sentence whose subject is a dense noun group: *The company built a new depot. The new depot blocked the school oval.*

Unscaffolded

Q7 (Reading and viewing). Return to Passages A and B in §3 of the Theory.

(a) Which passage reads faster, and which two clause choices create that pace? **(b)** Name one logical relation in Passage B and state the work it does. **(c)** One of these passages belongs at the opening of a story and the other in a formal report. Assign them, and justify each choice with a named feature of the syntax — not with the topic.

Q8 (Reading and viewing). Use the four-step routine to analyse this sentence in a short paragraph (roughly 100–140 words): *“Because the mine employed half the town, the protest stayed polite for weeks.”*

Q9 (Reading and viewing). Unpack the noun group *the long legal, financial and cultural shadow of the closed mine across the valley* into two or three full clauses. Then state, in one sentence, what generalisation the packed form makes possible that your clauses do not.

Q10 (Writing). Five facts: the market caught fire just before dawn; two stalls were lost; the brigade saved the bakery; the roof was rebuilt by spring; traders shared space while they waited. Write **(a)** a loose version (short main clauses, quick pace) and **(b)** a dense version (at least one fronted subordinate clause and two nominalisations). Finish with **(c)** one sentence stating which version you would use in a story and which in a report, and why the syntax suits each.

Q11 (Writing). Write a sentence that builds a concession about this scenario: *a team lost the final but earned the crowd's respect*. Then write the same two ideas in the other order. Choose the version you would publish and state, in one line, what your order makes the reader weigh most.

Q12 (Speaking and listening). In pairs, take Position 1 and Position 2 from the box in §4 and test both on the sentence *The closure of the library followed budget cuts*. Each partner first presents the *other* partner's position in its strongest form (say what it sees that your own position misses); then the pair writes one agreed sentence stating what each position catches that the other does not.

Q13 (Speaking and listening). Prepare a two-minute talk on one sentence from a text your class is studying: identify one clause choice (a relation, an order, or a packaging), run it through steps 1–3 of the routine, and end with one sentence on what it adds to the text's meaning or style.

Q14 (Speaking and listening). Panel discussion: *“Dense syntax hides more than it shows.”* Argue for and against the motion with equal care. Marks reward the quality of the reasoning on each side — terms defined, claims tested on an example, limits admitted — not the conclusion you reach.

Answers

Q1. (a) cause. (b) result. (c) condition. (d) concession. (e) manner.

Q2. (a) *Although the tide turned at dawn* — fronted; the turned tide is the frame the search is weighed against. (b) same clause, at the end; it reads as added information, and the search itself carries the weight. (c) *Unless the fog lifts* — fronted; the condition is set up before the point lands.

Q3. Sample: (a) *Because the river froze, the mail could not fly in.* (b) *Although the river froze, the mail still went through by dog sled.* (c) *If the river freezes, the mail will go by dog sled.* The preference line is yours; it should name what the fronted clause makes the reader hold first.

Q4. (a) *the collapse of the bridge.* (b) *the company's building of a new depot* (or *the building of a new depot*, with the company unsaid). (c) *the team's discovery of the fault.*

Q5. Explicit: that the library closed, and that this followed budget cuts. Unsaid: who decided to close it — the agent is not in the grammar.

Q6. Sample: *The company's building of a new depot blocked the school oval.* (Or, with the agent dropped: *The building of a new depot blocked the school oval.* — note that the second choice has already begun to hide the actor.)

Q7–Q14. Open tasks — see the model responses below.

Model responses

Q7. (a) Passage A reads faster: five short main clauses, one step per sentence, and no subordinate clause slows the walk. Passage B slows the reader with one long sentence, two subordinate clauses and stacked packaging. **(b)** The *although* clause builds concession: the warnings are admitted so that the town's surprise outweighs them — the syntax frames the event as a failure of response, not of weather. **(c)** Passage A opens the story: its clause-per-step syntax puts the reader inside the night. Passage B suits the formal report: its nominalisations (*the speed of the storm's arrival, the crossing, the evacuation*) package the night as findings to be stated, and its single measured sentence sounds like an account written after the facts were checked.

Q8. Sample. *Identify:* a fronted subordinate clause (*Because the mine employed half the town*) and a main clause (*the protest stayed polite for weeks*). *Name:* cause. *Weigh:* the fronted cause makes the town's dependence on the mine the frame for everything that follows, and the main clause lands on the restraint — so the sentence spotlights the tension between dependence and dissent, and leaves unsaid what the protest was about and who it targeted. *Connect:* the writer builds sympathy for a town that must bite its tongue; the calm grammar (*stayed polite*) carries the strain, and the stance is critical of a situation, not of any named person.

Q9. Sample unpacking: *The mine was closed, and its closure cast a long shadow; the shadow fell on the valley's law, on its money and on its way of life.* The packed form makes the whole aftermath one thing — *the shadow* — so a later sentence can date it, weigh it or argue that it has lifted; the clauses can only show it piece by piece.

Q10. Sample. **(a)** *The market caught fire just before dawn. Two stalls were lost. The brigade saved the bakery. The roof was rebuilt by spring, and traders shared space while they waited.* **(b)** *Although the fire took two stalls just before dawn, the brigade's saving of the bakery kept the market alive, and the rebuilding of the roof by spring ended the traders' season of shared space.* **(c)** The loose version opens the story because its pace is the panic; the dense version closes the report because its packaging is the summing-up.

Q11. Sample. Version 1: *Although the team lost the final, they earned the crowd's respect.* Version 2: *The team earned the crowd's respect, although they lost the final.* Publishing line: Version 1 makes the respect the landing point — the loss is the frame the win-in-defeat is weighed against — so it is the version that tells a story about character.

Q12. A strong pair answer names what each position catches on the same sentence. Position 1 catches the hiding: *the closure* says nothing about who voted for it, and a text that always writes this way never has to name a decider. Position 2 catches the resource: *the closure* is exactly what a report needs — one word for a whole decision, ready to be dated, counted and compared with *the cuts*. The agreed sentence might run: *The packaging is a tool when the actor is also on the record, and a screen when it is the only form the writer ever uses.*

Q13. A strong talk names the sentence and the source text, identifies one choice (for example a fronted concession, or a nominalisation), runs steps 1–3 aloud — clauses, name, weighing — and closes with one connect sentence such as: *By fronting the concession, the writer makes the reader hold the cost first, so the main clause lands as a win bought at a price.* The marking listens for the routine, not the vocabulary display.

Q14. A strong panel opens each side in its strongest form. For the motion: dense syntax can leave an agent out of the grammar, and a text that never names agents makes responsibility hard to find — test it on *The leaking of the report forced the resignation of the minister*, where the syntax never asks who leaked. Against the motion: hiding is a use, not a property — the same sentence, rewritten as *the minister's resignation*, keeps its actor, and dense syntax also *shows* things loose syntax cannot, such as a whole process held up as one thing to be judged. Marks reward each side for testing its case on an example and admitting its limit; two speakers reaching opposite conclusions can both deserve full marks.

Looking back. Syntax is the arrangement of clauses; every arrangement is a choice, and every choice moves the reader's attention. Combining clauses builds logical relations — cause, then result, manner, concession and condition — and the order of the clauses sets the emphasis. Nominalisation and abstraction in noun groups package processes and pictures as things a text can argue with, making some information more explicit at the same moment they can leave other information unsaid. Style is the pattern these choices make across a whole text — and because the pattern is countable, it can be analysed. That is the skill: not to judge a sentence loose or dense, but to say what its syntax puts in the light, what it leaves in the shade, and why that serves the writer's purpose.

What images and sound do: judging effects on representation

Curriculum trace. Victorian Curriculum 2.0 English, Level 10 · strand: Language · sub-strand: Language for expressing and developing ideas · content description VC2E10LA07 · Draws on: VC2E10LA07.E01, VC2E10LA07.E02 · builds on Level 9 VC2E9LA07

Theory

In Level 9 you learnt that symbols — in pictures, on screen and in a soundtrack — **augment** meaning: they add to it. Level 10 asks for more than noticing. It asks you to **evaluate**: to explain what a choice does to the way a person, place or event is represented, and to judge how well that choice works for its purpose and audience.

The word this section works with: representation. The Victorian Curriculum uses the term *representation* but does not define it. This section therefore treats it as follows: a **representation** is the version of a person, group, place, event or idea that a text builds through its choices — what is shown or hidden, lit or shadowed, played loudly or left silent. A representation is never a neutral copy of the world. Every image and every soundtrack is made of **choices**, and the choices do meaning-making work. Two texts can show the same person and build two completely different versions of them.

Images and sound make meaning through three connected systems.

System	Features you can name	Common effects on representation
Still image	light and dark (contrast) colour framing camera distance camera angle salience symbols	fixes attention; signals power, safety or threat; places people in a setting; can show two sides of a person at once
Moving image	everything in still image, plus: camera movement (pan, tilt, track, zoom); editing pace (fast cuts or long takes); transitions	builds tension or calm; controls what we notice, and when; shows a person or event changing over time
Sound	music sound effects voice (pitch, pace, volume, tone) silence diegetic and non-diegetic sound	cues feeling; grounds events in a real world; represents character through voice; an absence of sound can carry meaning too

Figure 1 The three systems of image and sound, with common features and typical effects.

A three-row table listing the three systems — still image, moving image and sound — with the features you can name in each and the common effects those features have on representation.

The systems rarely work alone. A film scene uses all three at once, and even a single still image “speaks” through light, framing (what the frame shows and leaves out) and symbol. The habit to build in this section is simple: when something in an image or soundtrack makes you feel or think a certain way, **find the choice that did it**.

Two terms from the table above are defined up front, because they do work in every image. **Framing** is what the frame includes and leaves out, and how. **Salience** is what the frame makes you notice first. Every other term in the table is defined where the section discusses it.

Light and dark

The amount and hardness of light in a frame is one of the fastest meaning-makers available.

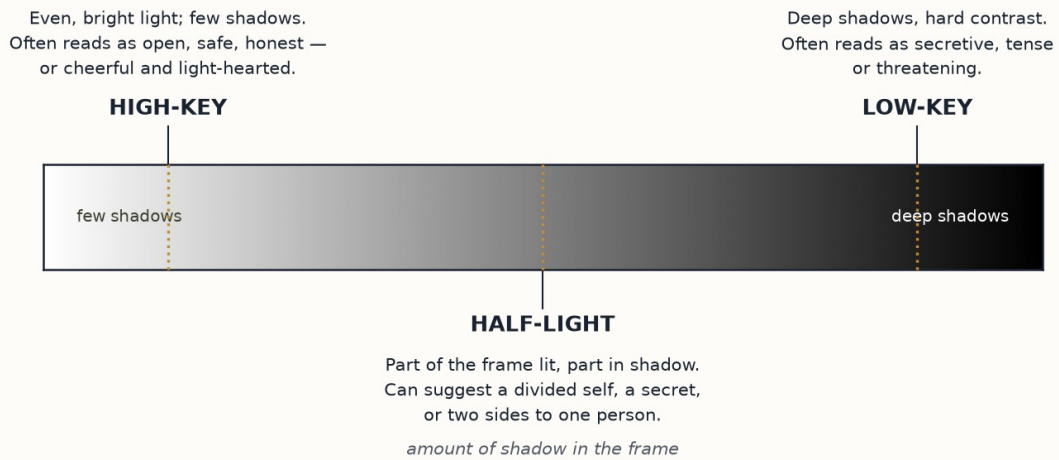


Figure 2 The lighting scale, from high-key to low-key. Where an image sits on this scale is a choice, and the choice does meaning-making work.

A horizontal scale from white to black with three labelled points: high-key (even, bright light, few shadows, reading as open, safe or cheerful), half-light (part lit, part shadowed, suggesting a divided self or a secret), and low-key (deep shadows and hard contrast, reading as secretive, tense or threatening).

These are habits, not laws: a bright frame can be sinister in the right company, and a shadowed one can be gentle. That is exactly why evaluation matters — you argue from the whole text, not from a lookup table.

The curriculum's own example for this feature is **duplicity** — the two-faced behaviour of a person who shows one self and hides another. Light and dark can represent duplicity in a single frame, as in the original still image below, composed for this section.

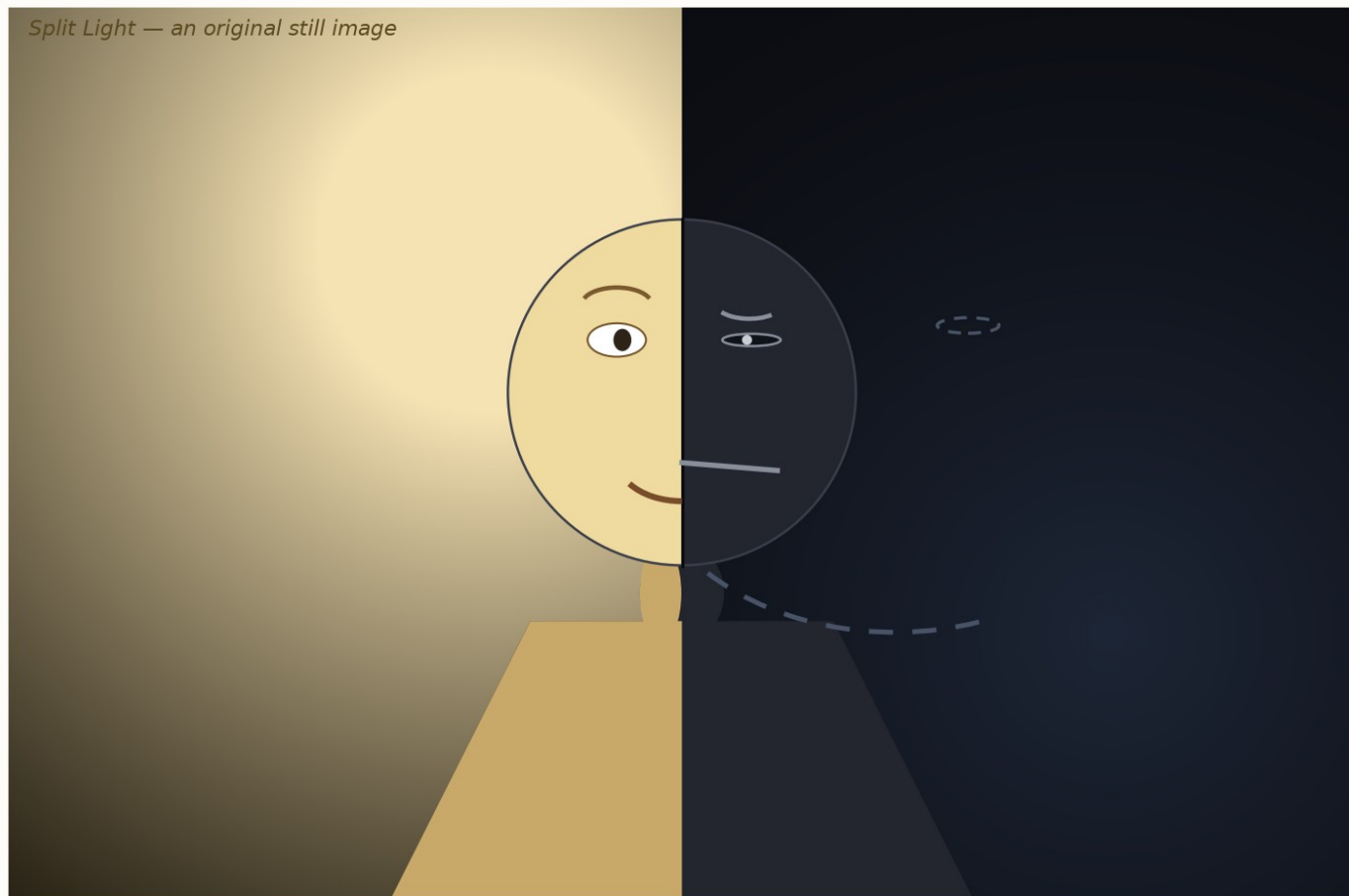


Figure 3 *Split Light*, an original still image. Light and dark are used to represent duplicity.

*An original still image titled **Split Light**: a person's face and shoulders centred on a frame that is flooded with warm light on the left and near-black on the right. The lit half of the face has an open eye, a relaxed brow and a soft smile; the shadow half has a narrowed eye and a thin flat mouth, and a second, larger dashed smile floats in the darkness behind.*

The annotated version names the features doing the work. **Salience** — what is made to stand out and be read first — is created here by brightness and centre placement: the face is the lightest thing in the frame, so your eye goes to it before you have decided anything.

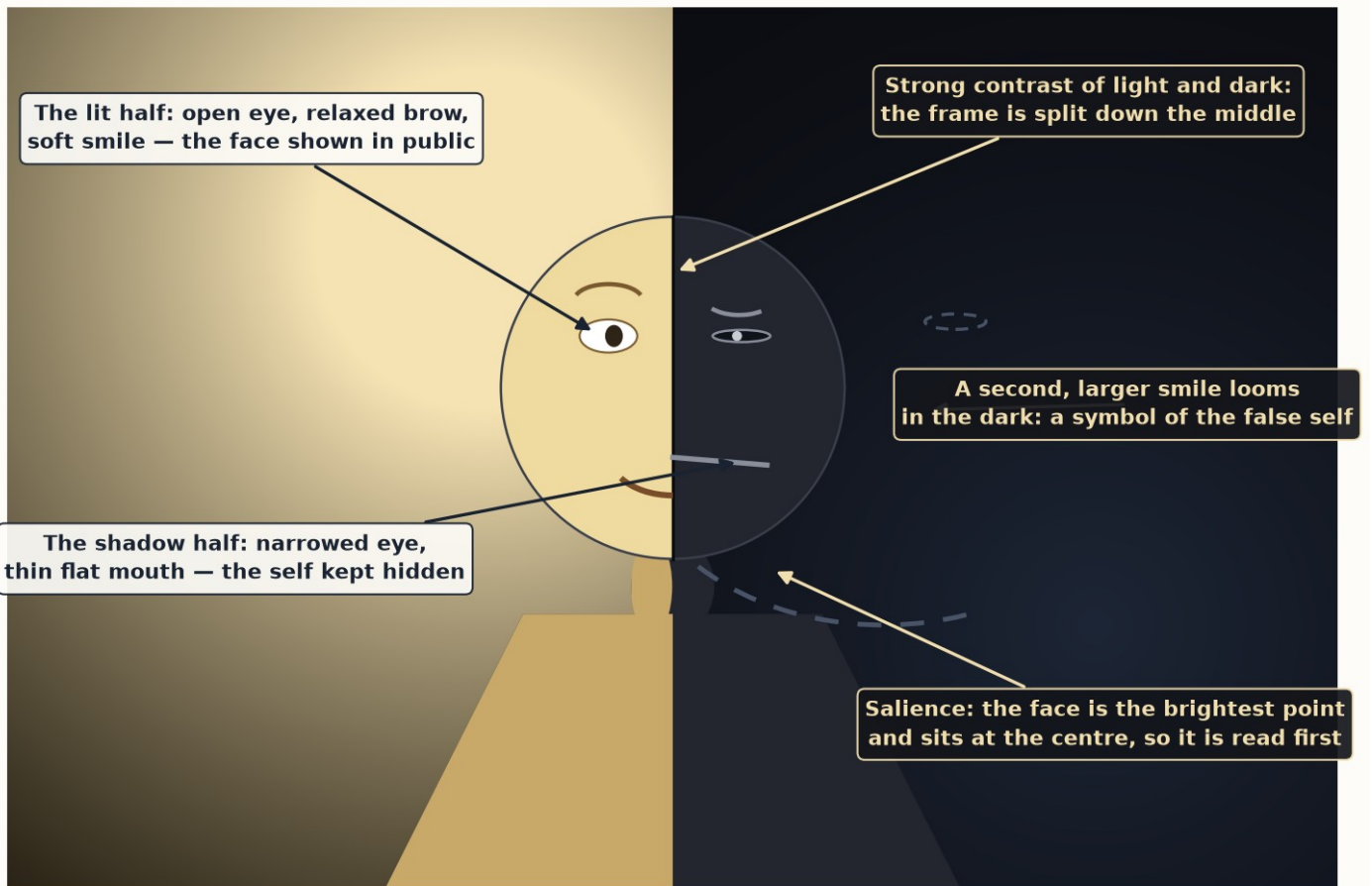


Figure 4 *Split Light*, annotated. Each arrow names a visual feature and the part of the representation it builds.

The same Split Light image with five labelled boxes and arrows: strong contrast of light and dark splitting the frame; the lit half as the public face; the shadow half as the hidden self; the looming dashed smile as a symbol of the false self; and salience, because the face is the brightest point and sits at the centre.

Framing, distance and angle

What the frame includes and leaves out, how far the camera sits from the subject, and whether it looks up, down or straight on — each is a choice about **who the viewer is made to be** in relation to the subject.

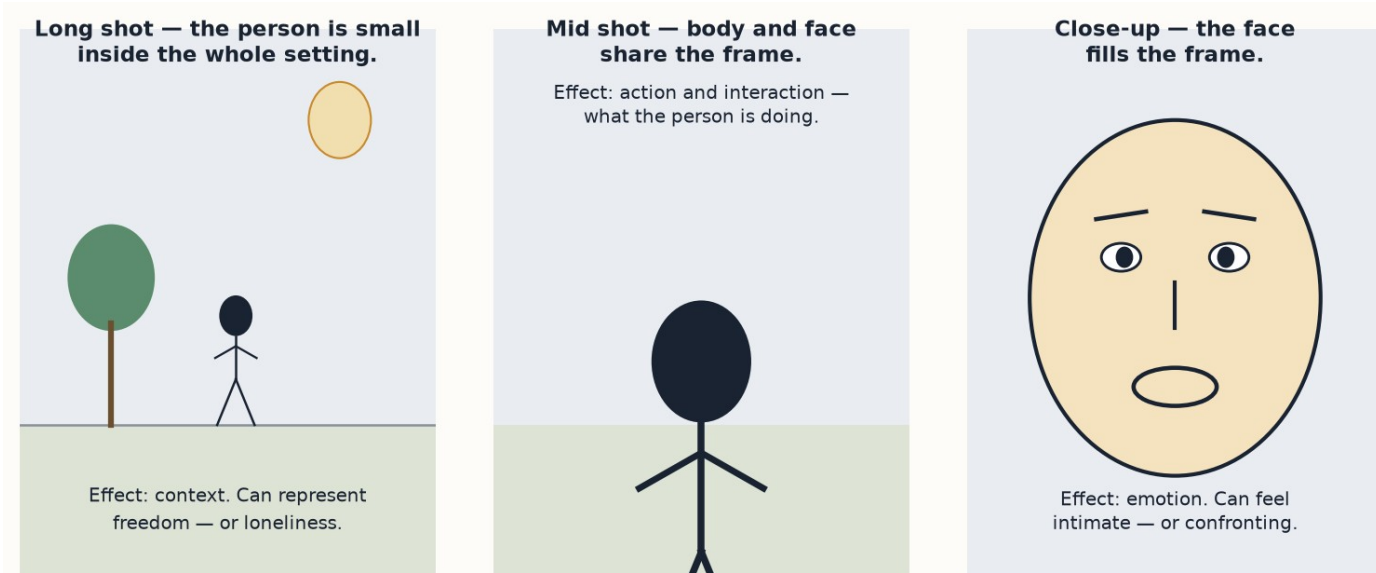


Figure 5 Camera distance: the same person framed three ways. Distance changes what the image asks us to notice.

Three panels showing the same person framed three ways: a long shot with the person small inside a setting of sky, tree and ground; a mid shot in which body and face share the frame, cropped just below the waist; and a close-up in which the face fills the frame. Each panel states its effect on representation.

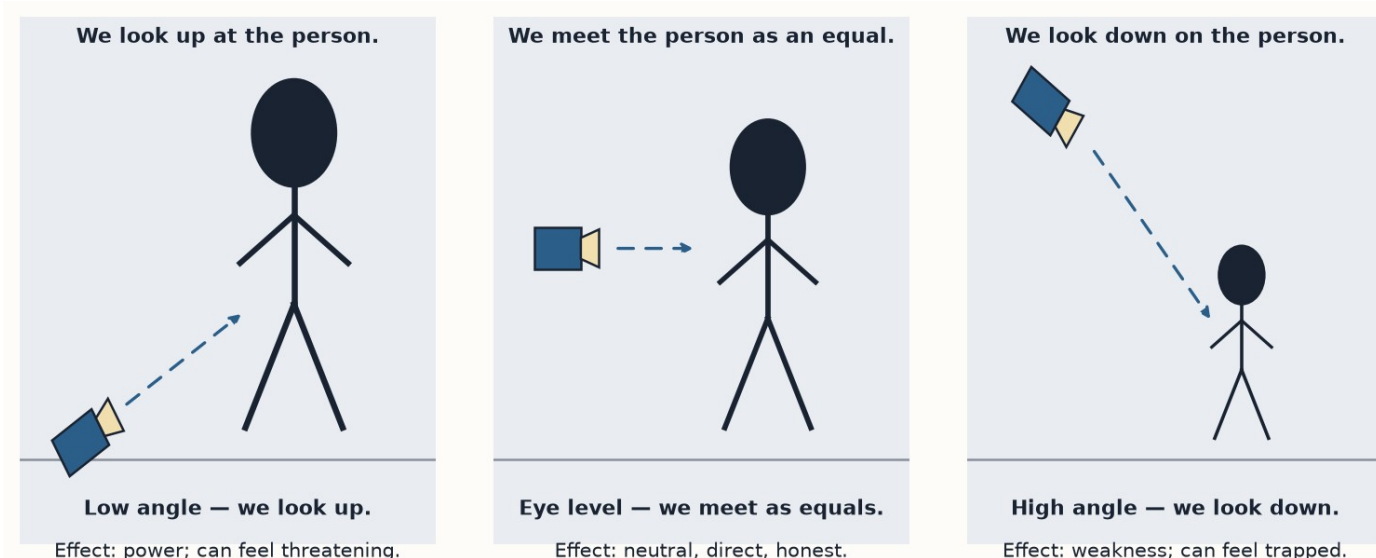


Figure 6 Camera angle: where the camera sits changes who holds power in the frame.

Three panels showing camera angle: a low-angle camera looking up at a large figure; an eye-level camera meeting the figure as an equal; and a high-angle camera looking down at a small figure. Each panel states its effect on who holds power in the frame.

The moving image adds time

A still image makes its point all at once. A moving image makes it **over time**, and that gives it two extra sets of choices:

- **Camera movement** — a pan (swinging left or right), a tilt (up or down), a track (moving with the subject), a zoom (closing in or pulling back). A slow push-in can make a moment feel important; a handheld shake can make it feel raw.
- **Editing** — how long a shot lasts and how shots join. Fast cutting can build energy, chaos or excitement; a long unbroken take can feel calm, honest, or trapped, because the viewer cannot look away. A **cut** that jumps between two worlds can itself be an argument, as Worked example 3 shows.

Sound

Sound is the system viewers notice least and feel most. Five resources do nearly all of the work.

Sound element	What it is	Common effects on representation
Music	the score or song laid under a scene; its tempo, key (major or minor), loudness and instruments	sets mood and cues feeling; major keys lift, minor keys darken; fast tempo builds tension
Sound effects	the concrete sounds of a place: footsteps, rain, doors, traffic, birdsong	builds a believable world; one detail can be made to matter (a clock, a hinge, a step)
Voice	how a character speaks: pitch, pace, loudness, tone, pauses	represents character directly; steady, low voice reads as calm or in control; fast as anxious
Silence	the deliberate removal of sound where sound was expected	can mark shock, threat, grief or a secret; often the loudest choice available
Diegetic and non-diegetic	diegetic = sound the characters can hear; non-diegetic = sound added for the audience only	controls whose world the sound is in; non-diegetic music tells the audience how to feel

Figure 7 The sound kit: five resources and the representational work each commonly does.

A five-row table — the sound kit — covering music, sound effects, voice, silence, and the diegetic/non-diegetic distinction, with what each element is and the representational work it commonly does.

Two terms in that table carry the whole subject, so define them clearly:

- **Diegetic sound** is sound that exists inside the story world — the characters can hear it: their own voices, footsteps, rain, a clock.
- **Non-diegetic sound** is added for the audience only — a score, a song laid over the scene. The characters cannot hear it, which is exactly what makes it powerful: it tells the audience how to feel without any character saying a word.

When sound is organised shot by shot it is written as a **cue sheet** — a timeline of what is heard and when. Here is the cue sheet for *The Donation*, the original film scene used as Stimulus B in this section.

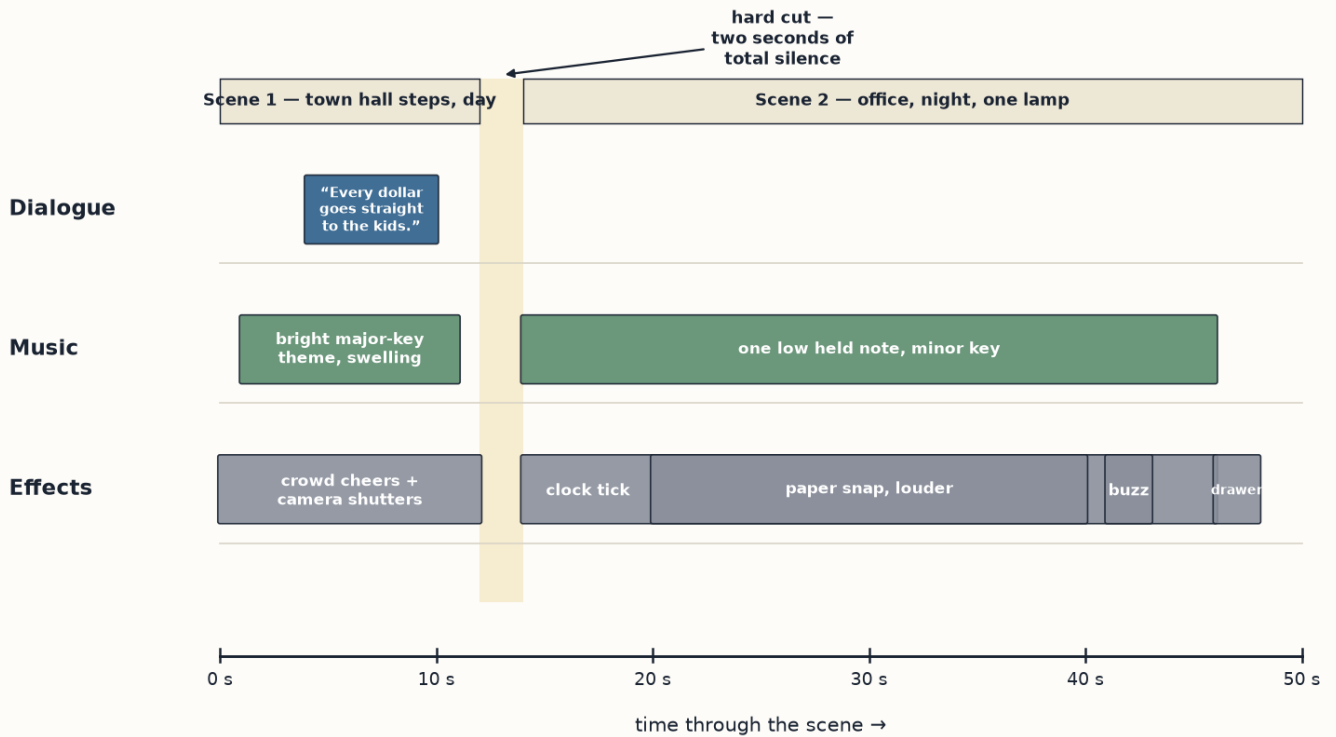


Figure 8 The sound cue sheet for *The Donation* (Stimulus B). The silence at the cut is as much a choice as any sound.

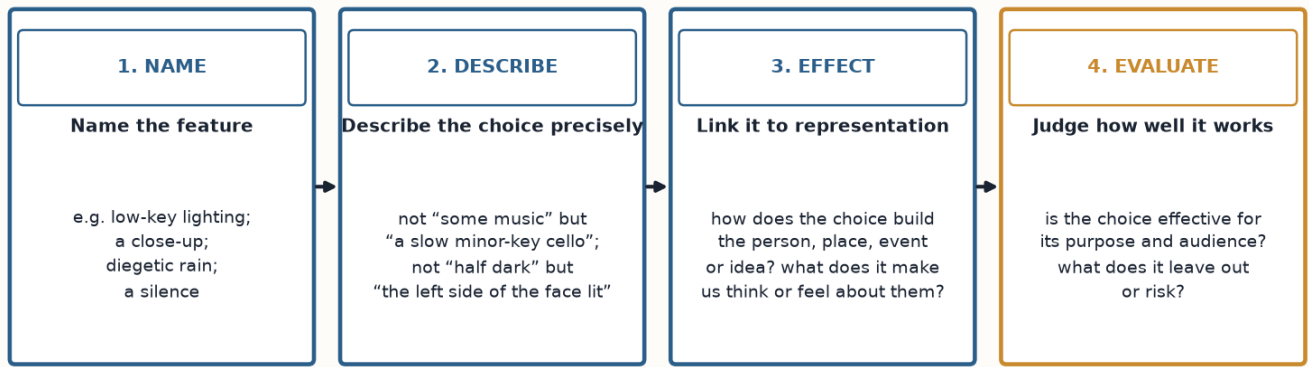
A timeline from zero to fifty seconds with three tracks — dialogue, music and effects — plus two scene strips. Scene 1 (town hall steps, day) carries crowd cheers, camera shutters, a warm line of dialogue and a bright major-key theme. At twelve seconds a hard cut brings two seconds of total silence. Scene 2 (office, night) carries a clock tick, a paper snap growing louder, a phone buzz, a drawer closing, and one low held minor-key note.

Notice the silence at the cut. Silence is not “nothing”: it is the removal of sound **where sound was expected**, and that removal is a choice with an effect, like every other choice.

From analysis to evaluation

Analysis names and explains the choices. Evaluation goes one step further and **judges** them: how well does the choice do its job, for this purpose and this audience — and what does it leave out or risk? Use the frame below every time you write about an image or a soundtrack.

The four-step frame for writing about image and sound choices



Steps 1–3 build analysis. Step 4 turns analysis into evaluation — the Level 10 move.

Figure 9 A reusable frame: name the feature, describe the choice, link it to representation, then evaluate.

A four-step horizontal flow diagram: 1 Name the feature; 2 Describe the choice precisely; 3 Link the choice to its effect on representation; 4 Evaluate how well it works. Steps one to three are outlined in blue and step four in gold, with arrows between the steps.

Worked examples

All three stimuli in this section are original texts written for this book.

Stimulus A — *Split Light* (still image). The image in Figures 3 and 4 above: a face and shoulders centred on a frame split between warm light and near-black, the two halves carrying two different expressions, with a second dashed smile floating in the dark.

Stimulus B — *The Donation* (film scene, described).

Scene 1 — Town hall steps, day. A mid shot shows the mayor at a lectern in front of a bank of cameras, holding up a large novelty cheque made out to the children’s ward. Sunlight floods the steps. A close-up catches her warm, unhurried smile as she says: “*Every dollar goes straight to the kids.*” The crowd cheers; camera shutters click. Quick cuts: the cheque, the crowd, her smile.

Scene 2 — Her office, night. One desk lamp. A single long take, no cuts: the camera stays close on her hands as she counts banknotes from a plain envelope into a drawer. The only sounds are a ticking clock and the soft snap of paper. Her phone buzzes with a journalist’s name on it. She turns it face-down without answering. The drawer slides shut.

Stimulus C — *Night Ferry* (audio scene, described). An audio-only scene: we hear waves lapping a wooden hull, a low engine drone, rain starting on a metal roof. A child’s voice asks, “*Are we there yet?*” No one answers. The engine stops; the waves go on. Far away, a foghorn sounds once.

Example 1 — scaffolded (still image: light and dark in *Split Light*)

Evaluate how light and dark represent duplicity in *Split Light*.

Analysis	Comment
The frame is split exactly down the middle: the left half is flooded with warm light, the right half is near-black.	Step 1–2: name the feature (light and dark) and describe the choice precisely.
The lit half carries the public face — open eye, relaxed brow, soft smile. The shadow half carries another — narrowed eye, thin flat mouth.	Step 3: link each half to one of the two selves being represented.

Analysis	Comment
A second, larger smile floats in the dark behind the shoulder, drawn but not lit.	Step 3: name the symbol and its job — the hidden self is present in the frame even where we “cannot see” it.
The face is the lightest thing in the frame and sits dead centre, so it is read first.	Step 2: salience — the choice about what we must notice.
The contrast is so stark that the idea of two selves lands in a single glance, with no words needed. The risk is that it is almost too neat: a viewer who wants subtlety may find the message obvious.	Step 4: evaluate — a strength, and one honest limitation.

Example 2 — scaffolded (sound in *The Donation*)

Evaluate how sound represents the mayor in *The Donation*.

Analysis	Comment
Scene 1 layers diegetic effects (cheers, shutters) under warm dialogue, with bright major-key music swelling over the top.	Step 1–2: describe the choices, and sort them into diegetic and non-diegetic.
The major-key score is non-diegetic: the crowd in the scene cannot hear it, but the audience is told to feel warmth and trust.	Step 3: the sound builds the mayor’s public representation — warm, generous, above suspicion.
At the hard cut every track stops for two full seconds.	Step 1: name the silence. It is a choice, not an absence of choices.
Scene 2 keeps only cold diegetic sounds — tick, paper snap, buzz, drawer — under one low held note.	Step 2–3: the private world has no warmth in it; the held note is the audience’s discomfort, not the character’s.
The same voice is warm in Scene 1 and silent in Scene 2, so one person is represented as two people. The silence at the cut is the hinge between them: it makes the audience lean in and doubt everything Scene 1 told them.	Step 3–4: link to representation and judge — the silence is the most efficient choice in the scene.

Example 3 — unscaffolded (moving image: the cut and the take in *The Donation*)

Model response.

The moving-image choices in *The Donation* represent the mayor as two different people by treating time differently in each scene. Scene 1 is cut fast — cheque, crowd, smile — the grammar of a news package, and it represents her the way a campaign wants her seen: all surface, all warmth, nothing held long enough to be examined. Scene 2 does the opposite: one long unbroken take on her hands, so the viewer is not allowed to look away, and the counting cannot be edited into something kinder. The camera distances reinforce the split. The mid shot and close-up of Scene 1 are the distances of public life — the face offered to cameras — while Scene 2’s close-up on the hands is a private distance, the camera seeing what the public never will. The hard cut between the two worlds is the scene’s sharpest claim: no dissolve, no bridge, no connection admitted. These choices are highly effective for a scene about duplicity, because the audience experiences the two selves as incompatible rather than just different. If the scene has a weakness, it is that the long take asks for patience: a faster-cut version of Scene 2 would reach more viewers, but at the cost of the trapped feeling that is the take’s whole point.

Example 4 — unscaffolded (sound only: *Night Ferry*)

Model response.

Because *Night Ferry* has no images at all, every part of the representation is carried by sound, and the choices are precise. The diegetic layer — waves on a wooden hull, an engine drone, rain on metal — builds the world as small, old and enclosed; we know the boat’s size from the water sounds the way we would know a room from an echo. The child’s question, “*Are we there yet?*”, represents the crossing as long and tiring, and the silence where an answer should be represents the adults’ fear without naming it: nobody lies to the child, but nobody comforts them either. When the engine stops, the removal of the drone — the sound we had stopped noticing — is the scene’s hardest

choice, because silence after noise reads as trouble, and the waves that continue underneath tell us the crossing has not ended, only stalled. The single distant foghorn then does the work of a whole paragraph: another vessel, unseen, somewhere in the same dark water. These choices are effective because they represent the event the way a child experiences it — as sound, waiting and uncertainty — and their one risk is the reverse of their strength: with no image to anchor it, a viewer who wants certainty about what is happening is given none, and the scene depends on the audience accepting not knowing.

Practice questions

Scaffolded

Q1. Match each feature (a–e) to the effect it most reliably creates (i–v).

- (a) low-angle shot
- (b) long shot of a single person
- (c) fast cutting
- (d) minor-key music under a happy scene
- (e) close-up held for a long time
- (i) energy, urgency or chaos
- (ii) a person represented as small against their world — freedom or loneliness
- (iii) unease: the sound contradicts the image
- (iv) power or threat
- (v) emotion examined until it is uncomfortable

Q2. Look at the annotated *Split Light* (Figure 4). (a) Which label names a choice about **salience**? (b) Which two labels name **symbols** rather than camera choices? (c) In your own words, what does the split lighting represent?

Q3. Sort the sounds of *The Donation* into two columns, **diegetic** and **non-diegetic**: the crowd’s cheers; the camera shutters; the major-key theme of Scene 1; the mayor’s voice; the clock tick; the paper snap; the phone buzz; the low held note of Scene 2.

Q4. Choose a camera distance and angle for each representation goal, and give a one-line reason. (a) Represent a speaker as honest and equal to the audience. (b) Represent a manager as cold and in control over a junior worker. (c) Represent a lost child in a big station.

Q5. In the cue sheet (Figure 8), every track stops for two seconds at the hard cut. Name the feature, and state in one sentence what the silence adds that sound could not.

Q6. Complete these two evaluation stems about *Split Light*, then say which of your two sentences is the **evaluation** and which is the **analysis**: “The choice to light only half the face represents ...” and “This choice works well because ..., though it risks ...”.

Un scaffolded

Q7. Using the four-step frame (Figure 9), write one paragraph (6–8 sentences) evaluating how light and dark represent duplicity in *Split Light*. Include at least one honest limitation of the image.

Q8. A character sits a test they are certain to fail, but they must look calm in front of their class. Write a sound cue plan of 6–8 lines for this moment: at least one diegetic effect, one non-diegetic choice, one change in the character's voice, and one deliberate silence. For each line, state in a phrase what it represents.

Q9. Below are two versions of the same event — a Saturday morning street market. Identify **three** features that differ between the versions, and evaluate which version more effectively represents the market as (i) welcoming, (ii) neglected or unsafe.

Version A. Wide shot, 9 a.m., the whole street in sunlight. White tents, bright bunting, kids chasing a dog between stalls. A busker plays something fast and major-key. Voices overlap; someone laughs; a trader calls a price like a joke.

Version B. Low, close shots at the same hour, but the camera stays in the gaps: long shadows between stalls, a torn poster flapping, one light flickering. The busker's tune arrives slowed down and minor-key. Laughter is heard far away and muffled; a dog growls low.

Q10. (*Speaking and listening.*) In pairs: Speaker — in 60–90 seconds, tell your partner which **single** feature of *The Donation* (image, moving image or sound) does the most work in representing the mayor, using the four-step frame out loud. Listener — respond with **one** point of agreement and **one** respectful challenge ("I'd argue the cut matters more, because ..."). Swap roles. Note the challenge you received and how you answered it.

Q11. (*Creating.*) Plan a 30-second sequence (five shots, described in a table) representing a character who is hiding something at a family dinner. For each shot give: distance, angle, one light choice and one sound choice. Then write two sentences evaluating your own plan: its strongest choice, and its riskiest one.

Q12. Evaluate this claim: "*Silence is only the absence of sound, so it cannot represent anything.*" First state the claim in its strongest form — when is it right? — then test it against *The Donation* or *Night Ferry* and reach a reasoned conclusion.

Answers

Q1. (a)–(iv); (b)–(ii); (c)–(i); (d)–(iii); (e)–(v).

Q2. (a) The salience label — the face is the brightest point and sits at the centre, so it is read first. (b) The looming dashed smile (the false self) and, arguably, the light/dark split itself (what is shown versus what is hidden). (c) Any answer of the form: the two lighting zones build two selves — the warm, open self offered in public and the cold, closed self kept hidden.

Q3. Diegetic: crowd cheers; camera shutters; the mayor’s voice; clock tick; paper snap; phone buzz. Non-diegetic: the major-key theme of Scene 1; the low held note of Scene 2.

Q4. (a) Eye level, mid shot — equality, neither party above the other. (b) Low angle on the manager (we look up), high angle on the junior (we look down); the contrast does the representing. (c) Long shot, slightly high angle — the child small in a large frame, the viewer looking down with concern.

Q5. Feature: a deliberate silence at the hard cut. It adds a felt break between the two selves — the audience’s own uncertainty — which no sound could state without telling rather than showing.

Q6. First stem = analysis (names choice and effect); second stem = evaluation (judges success and risk). Example completions: “...represents the mayor-type figure as two people in one skin”; “...works well because the idea lands in a single glance, though it risks reading as obvious”.

Q7–Q12. See the fully-worked solutions below.

Fully-worked solutions

Q7. Model paragraph. The still image *Split Light* uses hard contrast between light and dark to represent duplicity without a word of text. The frame is divided exactly down the middle, warm light on the left, near-black on the right, so the two halves cannot blend: this is a person presented as two people. The lit half carries the face offered in public — open eye, relaxed brow, soft smile — while the shadow half carries the self kept hidden, with its narrowed eye and thin flat mouth, and the larger dashed smile floating behind makes the hidden self loom over the visible one. Salience is handled by brightness and centre placement, so the face is read before anything else. The image’s great strength is speed: the representation of two-facedness lands in a single glance. Its limitation is that the same starkness leaves the viewer nothing to discover; a subtler gradient of light would have rewarded a second look. Overall the choices are effective for a poster-like statement of duplicity, less so for a portrait that invites lingering.

Q8. Sample cue plan. 1 — Diegetic: a clock tick, steady, slightly too loud → represents the pressure the character feels. 2 — Diegetic: chairs scraping and classmates’ pens → the ordinary world continuing, indifferent. 3 — Voice: the character’s answers at an even pace, one breath each, never rushing → represents control performed for the room. 4 — Non-diegetic: no music at all in the first half → refuses to tell the audience how to feel, matching the character’s flat mask. 5 — Deliberate silence: when the teacher walks past, every background sound drops for two seconds → represents the character’s frozen attention. 6 — Non-diegetic: a single low note enters as the teacher moves on → the audience’s relief, not the character’s. 7 — Diegetic: the character’s exhale, audible, at the end → the mask slips by one breath; the fear was there all along.

Q9. Model comparative response. Three features differ clearly: light (Version A’s full sunlight against Version B’s shadows and one flickering light), sound (A’s fast major-key busking and near laughter against B’s slowed minor-key tune, muffled laughter and a growl), and framing (A’s wide inclusive shot against B’s low close shots of gaps and torn edges). For representing the market as **welcoming**, Version A is the more effective: the wide shot includes the viewer in the crowd, the sunlight and major key read as open and safe, and overlapping voices represent community. For representing the market as **neglected or unsafe**, Version B is the more effective: the framing visits only the broken edges, the slowed minor key turns the same busker into a warning, and laughter heard far away and muffled represents a community the viewer is shut out of. Version B is the braver representation overall — it makes the same event mean something different using almost nothing but light, distance and sound — while Version A’s weakness is that its warmth is almost a checklist of cheerful signs.

Q10. Sample listening note. “My partner challenged my claim that the silence at the cut does the most work, arguing the low held note of Scene 2 matters more because it lasts thirty seconds, not two. I answered that the note needs the silence to be noticed at all — we only hear the held note as a change because the cut first emptied our ears. My partner accepted that the silence is the hinge, but I now concede the note is what makes the silence keep working afterwards.”

Q11. Sample sequence table and self-evaluation.

Shot	Distance and angle	Light choice	Sound choice
1	Long shot, eye level — the whole table	Warm, even, high-key	Diegetic: plates, chatter, a joke landing
2	Mid shot, eye level — the character serving food	Still warm	Voice: the character laughing a beat too long
3	Close-up, slightly high — the character’s hands under the table	Hands fall into shadow	Diegetic: a phone buzzing once, killed fast
4	Close-up, eye level — the character’s face as an aunt asks a question	One side of the face lit, one dark	Deliberate silence: the chatter drops for two seconds
5	Long shot, slightly high — the table again, as if nothing happened	Warm light returns	Non-diegetic: a single low note under the laughter

Self-evaluation: the strongest choice is Shot 4’s two-second silence, because the family’s noise is only noticed by its absence, exactly as the secret is only noticed by the character. The riskiest choice is Shot 3’s shadowed hands under an otherwise high-key frame, which may read as a mistake in lighting rather than a meaning unless Shots 4 and 5 confirm it.

Q12. Model evaluation. Stated in its strongest form, the claim is right about ordinary silence: most of the time, silence is simply no sound — an empty room, a pause with nothing in it — and it would be overreading to treat every quiet moment as a message. The claim fails, however, the moment silence is **placed**. In *The Donation*, the two seconds of total silence sit exactly at the cut between the cheering steps and the counting hands; a silence arranged that precisely, between two sound worlds that contradict each other, is not an absence but a statement — the audience’s doubt, made audible by contrast. In *Night Ferry*, the missing answer to the child’s question represents adult fear more sharply than any reassurance could, because an expected sound withheld is information. The claim therefore confuses silence as a default with silence as a choice: where a text could have made a sound and chose not to, the silence represents — the refusal, the shock, the secret — and evaluating that representation is exactly the reader’s and viewer’s job.

The exact word: growing a vocabulary that hits the mark

Curriculum trace. Victorian Curriculum 2.0 English, Level 10 · Language strand · sub-strand *Language for expressing and developing ideas* · **VC2E10LA08** · Draws on: VC2E10LA08.E01 · Builds on Level 9 VC2E9LA08

Three terms, defined up front

The Victorian Curriculum uses the phrases *expanded vocabulary*, *precision* and *technical vocabulary* without defining any of them. Other definitions exist and are not interchangeable with the ones used here, so this section states its own:

- **expanded vocabulary** means a growing stock of words a person understands when they meet them and can call on when they need them — wider with every year, and deeper in its shades of meaning;
- **precision** in word choice means the chosen word carries exactly the meaning the writer intends in that spot — no more, no less;
- **technical vocabulary** means words that carry a fixed, shared meaning inside one subject or craft, so that its users can name one exact thing and be understood.

Every task in this section is answerable on those three definitions alone. The same rule applies to every other term introduced here — from *denotation* to *iambic pentameter* — each is defined the first time it appears, and none is assumed before that.

This section is not a word list. A list of forty words you have never used is not an expanded vocabulary; it is a shelf of unopened tools. The working question of the section is the curriculum's own: how do you *understand* more words, and how do you *use* the ones you have with precision?

Theory

1. Two kinds of meaning: denotation and connotation

Every word carries two layers of meaning. The **denotation** of a word is its central, dictionary meaning — the thing it points to. The **connotation** of a word is the load of feelings, judgements and associations it carries on top of that central meaning.

Two kinds of meaning: denotation and connotation

home

DENOTATION

the central, dictionary meaning

The place where someone lives.

Shared with its near-synonyms: residence, dwelling, house

...

CONNOTATION

the load of feelings and judgements carried on top

warmth safety belonging family rest

Not shared with residence. The load is felt before it can be named.

home and residence point at the same thing. Their denotation is shared; their connotations are not. When a writer chooses between near-synonyms, most of the choice happens at the connotation layer.

A diagram with the word *home* in the centre; one panel labels its denotation as the central meaning, the place where someone lives, and the other panel lists its connotations as chips reading *warmth, safety, belonging, family and rest*, with a note that the denotation is shared but the connotation is the load a word carries

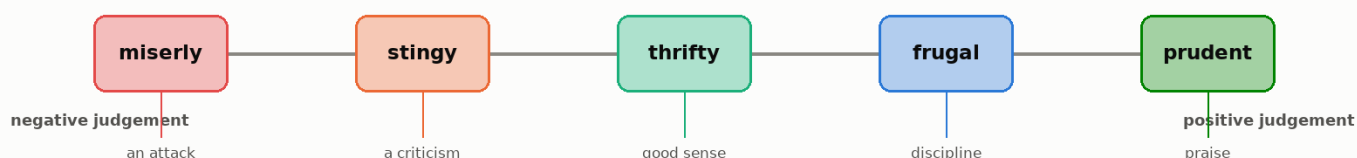
Two words can share a denotation and carry very different connotations. *Home* and *residence* point at the same thing; one of them is warm and the other is paperwork. This is the first fact of precision: when a writer chooses between near-synonyms, most of the choice is happening at the connotation layer, where the reader feels it before they can name it.

2. Near-synonyms: same denotation, different load

Near-synonyms are words that share a denotation but differ in shade — in strength, in register, or, above all, in judgement. Take five ways of saying that a person is careful with money. The denotation stays put; the judgement swings from praise to insult.

Near-synonyms on a judgement scale: careful with money

The denotation hardly moves. The judgement swings.



Same denotation, five different loads. Calling someone thrifty praises them; calling them miserly attacks them. Choosing the word is choosing the judgement.

A horizontal scale running from negative judgement to positive judgement with five word chips placed along it in order: *miserly, stingy, thrifty, frugal and prudent*, and a note that the denotation stays fixed while each word carries a different judgement

Call someone *thrifty* and you are praising their good sense; call them *miserly* and you are attacking their character — and the only thing that changed was the word. A reader who knows the scale can say exactly what a writer is doing: the novelist who writes *she was frugal with her praise* has told you the praise was real but rationed, and no plain word like *careful* would have carried both halves of that.

The skill runs in both directions. Reading, you notice the load; writing, you choose it. Level 9 asked you to see what word choices do to a text's style, mood and tone (VC2E9LA08); Level 10 asks you to make those choices yourself and to say, word by word, why this one and not its neighbour.

3. Technical vocabulary: words as tools

The curriculum's one elaboration for this content description (VC2E10LA08 . E01) points at a particular kind of vocabulary — the technical words of a subject. Its example is poetry: knowing that a poem's beat has a name, *iambic pentameter*, and being able to use that name when you analyse.

Technical vocabulary works differently from everyday words. A technical term is a tool with one job: it names one exact thing, so that everyone in the subject can talk about that thing without pointing and hoping. When you write *alliteration* instead of “that thing where the same letter keeps happening”, your reader loses nothing and you gain speed, exactness and the ability to build on the sentence afterwards.

Here is a kit of technical terms for talking about rhythm and sound in poetry. Each is defined, and each is demonstrated on an example written for this book:

A technical kit for talking about rhythm and sound

Technical vocabulary: words with a fixed, shared meaning inside the subject.

Term	What it names	Original example
iamb	a foot of two syllables: unstressed, then stressed	<i>the TIDE</i>
pentameter	a line built of five feet	<i>a ten-syllable line in five feet</i>
iambic pentameter	a line of five iambs	<i>The ferry lights were moving down the bay</i>
caesura	a full stop inside a line	<i>He did not watch the sea. The sea watched him</i>
enjambment	a sentence running past a line break	<i>She waited past the hour / when the last train left</i>
alliteration	repeated consonant sounds at the starts of words	<i>bright brass bells along the breakwater</i>
assonance	repeated vowel sounds inside words	<i>the slow glow of the coals</i>
sibilance	hissing s sounds	<i>the sea sat still</i>

*Each term is a tool: it names one exact thing, so analysis does not have to point and hope.
Every example above was written for this book.*

A table titled a technical kit for talking about rhythm and sound, with eight rows giving each term, what it names and an original example: iamb is one unstressed syllable followed by a stressed one; pentameter is a line of five feet; iambic pentameter is five iambs in one line; caesura is a full stop inside a line; enjambment is a sentence running past a line break; alliteration is repeated consonant starts; assonance is repeated vowel sounds; and sibilance is hissing s sounds

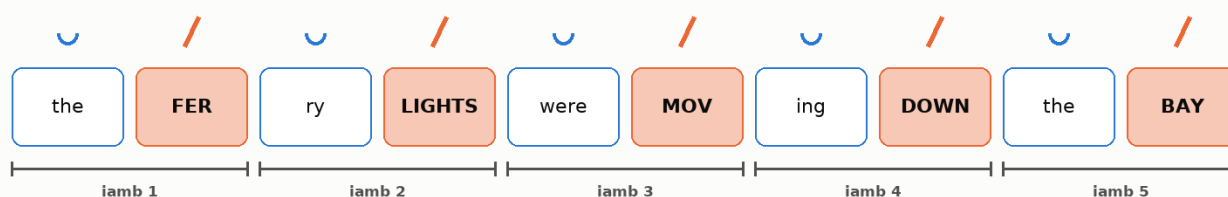
Two habits come with technical vocabulary. First, define it the first time you use it in any extended piece of writing — *caesura*, a full stop inside a line — so the term lands as a tool, not a password. Second, never use the term where the observation would do: naming the caesura without saying what it does is decoration, not analysis.

4. Scansion: naming what rhythm does

The elaboration's own example is **iambic pentameter**, so here it is in full. A **syllable** is one beat of a word (*har-bour* has two). In English, some syllables in a line are **stressed** — said with more weight — and some are unstressed. A **foot** is a small group of syllables forming one unit of rhythm. An **iamb** is a foot of two syllables, unstressed then stressed: *the TIDE*. A **pentameter** is a line of five feet. So **iambic pentameter** is a line of five iambs — ten syllables going da-DUM, da-DUM, da-DUM, da-DUM, da-DUM. Marking a line's stresses this way is called **scansion**.

Scansion: marking the stresses in a line

To scan a line is to mark which syllables carry the weight. The line below was written for this book.



Five feet, each one unstressed then stressed: da-DUM, da-DUM, da-DUM, da-DUM, da-DUM — ten syllables in all.

= iambic pentameter

A labelled scansion of the original line *The ferry lights were moving down the bay*, with its ten syllables in boxes, unstressed and stressed marks above them, brackets grouping the syllables into five feet labelled iamb, and a note that ten syllables in five iambs is iambic pentameter

Why does a technical term like this matter to a reader? Because the rhythm is part of the meaning. Iambic pentameter sits close to the pace of a calm speaking voice, which is why it has carried so much English storytelling and drama for so long. When a poem in that metre breaks the pattern — drops in two heavy stresses in a row, or runs a sentence over a line break — the break is audible, and it is doing work. You cannot describe that work if you have no words for the pattern it breaks.

5. Two positions, both worth their strongest form

Position 1 — the case for expansion. In *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language* (1995), David Crystal describes English vocabulary as built up in layers over centuries of borrowing, so that clusters of near-synonyms survive side by side, their differences lying in tone, formality and force. In its strongest form, this position says: knowing more words is knowing more meanings. A writer who holds five words for careful-with-money can say five different things; a writer who holds one can say one.

Position 2 — the case for the plain word. In his 1946 essay *Politics and the English Language*, George Orwell argued that writers reach for impressive ready-made phrases to avoid choosing words for their meaning, and that this habit blurs thought itself. In its strongest form, this position says: choose the word for what it means, never for how it impresses, and never reach for a long word where a short one does the work.

Both positions are right about a real point, and they meet on the same ground: precision. Expansion is a resource only when each added word is chosen for its exact load; plainness is a virtue only when the plain word is the exact one. The enemy of both is the same habit — using words for show instead of for meaning. (No text is quoted from either source; the positions are summarised and attributed.)

6. Register and collocation: words carry company

Precision is not only about meaning; it is also about fit. Two kinds of fit matter most.

Register is the level of formality a word belongs to — where it sits on the scale from slang, through informal and neutral, to formal and technical. A word can be exactly right in meaning and exactly wrong in register, the way swimwear is exactly wrong at a wedding. The same fact can be dressed for five different rooms:

One fact, five registers

Register is where a word sits on the scale from slang to technical. The message never changes; the dressing does.

Register	The words
Slang	Heads up — the hall's shut tonight.
Informal	The hall is closed tonight, sorry!
Neutral	The hall is closed this evening.
Formal	Please note that the hall is closed this evening.
Official	The facility is closed to the public this evening for scheduled maintenance.

Same fact, five rooms. Every word that changes — shut to closed, the hall to the facility, tonight to this evening — is a choice about who is being spoken to.

A table showing one message, that the hall is closed this evening, written in five registers from slang to official, each row labelled with its register, and a note that every word changed is a choice about audience

Collocation is the company a word naturally keeps — the words that usually sit next to it. You *make* a mistake and *do* your homework; you pay someone a *compliment* but give them a *gift*. Nothing in the dictionary forbids *do a mistake*; it simply never walks with *do*, and a reader notices the wrong company at once, even if they could not say why. Part of knowing a word precisely is knowing its company.

Collocation: the company words keep

The dictionary allows almost any pairing. Usage keeps the real ones.

make a mistake

not: do a mistake

do your homework

not: make your homework

pay a compliment

not: give a compliment

give a gift

not: pay a gift

heavy rain

not: strong rain

fast food

not: quick food

*A reader notices wrong company at once, even without being able to say why.
Part of knowing a word precisely is knowing the words it walks with.*

A set of six cards each showing a natural word pair such as make a mistake, do your homework, pay a compliment, give a gift, heavy rain and fast food, with the pairing that usage rejects shown underneath in grey, and a note that the dictionary allows almost any pairing but usage keeps the real ones

7. Growing the stock: morphology, context, use

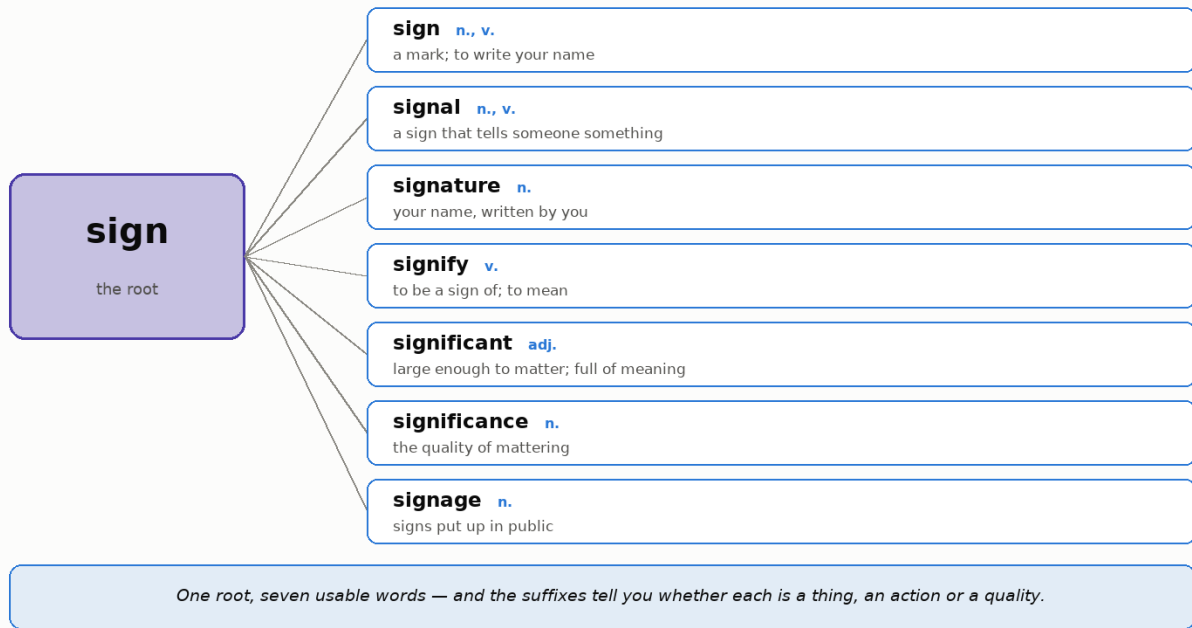
An expanded vocabulary grows through three moves, and all three can be practised.

Meet new words widely — in novels, news, essays, films, games, conversations. The reading range this level sets — Australian classics and new Australian writing, world literature, and stories from across Asia — is a field of words you have not yet met.

Know them properly. Two tools do most of the work. The first is **morphology** — the study of how words are built. Many English words are built from a **root** with pieces added: **prefixes** at the front and **suffixes** at the end. Learn one root and you may unlock a whole **word family**:

One root, seven words: morphology grows the stock

Many English words are built from a root with prefixes and suffixes added. Learn the root once and the family comes with it.



A branching diagram with the root *sign* at the centre and seven related words around it — *sign*, *signal*, *signature*, *signify*, *significant*, *significance* and *signage* — each labelled with its part of speech, and a note that one root grows seven usable words

The second tool is context: the sentence around an unknown word usually narrows its meaning to a short list, and often to one. Read to the end of the sentence before reaching for a dictionary, then check your guess against the dictionary — the checking is where the learning happens.

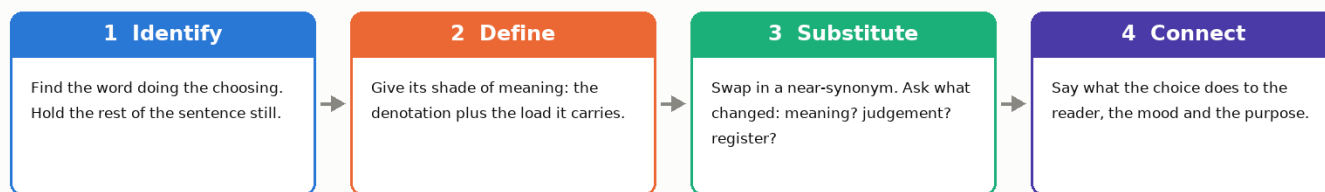
Use them. A word you have met but never used is only half learned. Precision grows at the point of use: in your drafts, in your talks, in the sentence where you choose *frugal* over *careful* and can say why.

A habit, not a list. Keep a working word notebook with three columns — *the word*, *what it means and how it behaves* (register, company, load), and *a sentence of your own that uses it*. Add words as you meet them; return to the page at the end of each week and mark the words you have actually used. The ones still unused become your targets for the next piece of writing. This is the ongoing practice this section runs on: a little, often, and always inside your own sentences.

8. The precision routine: the substitution test

Analysis of vocabulary needs a routine, the way clause analysis needed one in Section 2B. The heart of it is the **substitution test**: hold the sentence still, swap one word for a near-synonym, and ask what changed. If nothing changed, the word was not doing much; if the meaning, the judgement or the register moved, you have found where the work is.

The precision routine: a substitution test in four steps



Worked on one sentence:

"The old hall has outlasted every plan to pull it down."

Identify: the verb outlasted — one word chosen; the rest held still.

Define: to last longer than what is trying to end you — survival against opposition, not by accident.

Substitute: survived loses the opponent; outlived fits living things better. Both soften the contest.

Connect: the hall is set up as a quiet winner in a contest the sentence never has to name.

If the swap changes nothing, the word was not doing much. If something moved, that is where the meaning lives.

A four-step flowchart for vocabulary analysis: identify the word, define its shade of meaning, substitute a near-synonym and ask what changed, and connect the choice to its effect; with one original sentence about a hall outlasting every plan to pull it down worked through all four steps in side lines

Worked on the sentence printed in the figure, the routine produces a complete analysis in four moves: the word is identified (*outlasted*), its shade is defined (to last longer than something that is trying to end you — survival against opposition, not by accident), the substitution shows the load (*survived* loses the opponent; *outlived* fits living things better), and the connect step states the effect (the hall is set up as a quiet winner in a contest the sentence never has to name). Use that routine — identify, define, substitute, connect — in every task below.

9. Model text: 'The Watchman'

Read the poem once for its story, then again as an analyst. It was written for this book, and every mark on it is one you will be asked to make yourself.

Model text — 'The Watchman' (written for this book)

The Watchman

Each night the watchman climbed the lighthouse stair,

his lantern sweeping circles through the fog;

below, the harbour **held its breath and waited**

while gulls went silent in the **salted dark**.

He did not watch the **sea**. The sea watched him —

patient, and cold, and silent as the moon.

Each dawn he wound the clockwork, trimmed the wick,

and wrote one line: **the light held through the night**.

iambic pentameter — line 1

Five iambs: the poem walks in at the pace of a calm speaking voice.

personification — line 3

The harbour holds its breath. The place feels what the watchman feels.

compressed image — line 4

Taste packed into sight in two words; the unpacked version takes six.

caesura — line 5

A full stop mid-line: the two halves face each other like the watchman and the sea.

double duty — line 8

The light stayed on — and the watchman held out. One word, two jobs.

Every mark on this poem is one you will be asked to make yourself.

*The full text of the original eight-line poem *The Watchman*, written for this book, with three phrases highlighted in colour and labelled: *held its breath and waited* as personification, *salted dark* as a compressed image, and *the light held through the night* as a word with double duty, and with the first line marked as iambic pentameter and the fifth line marked with a caesura*

The Watchman

Each night the watchman climbed the lighthouse stair,

his lantern sweeping circles through the fog;

below, the harbour held its breath and waited

while gulls went silent in the salted dark.

He did not watch the sea. The sea watched him —

patient, and cold, and silent as the moon.

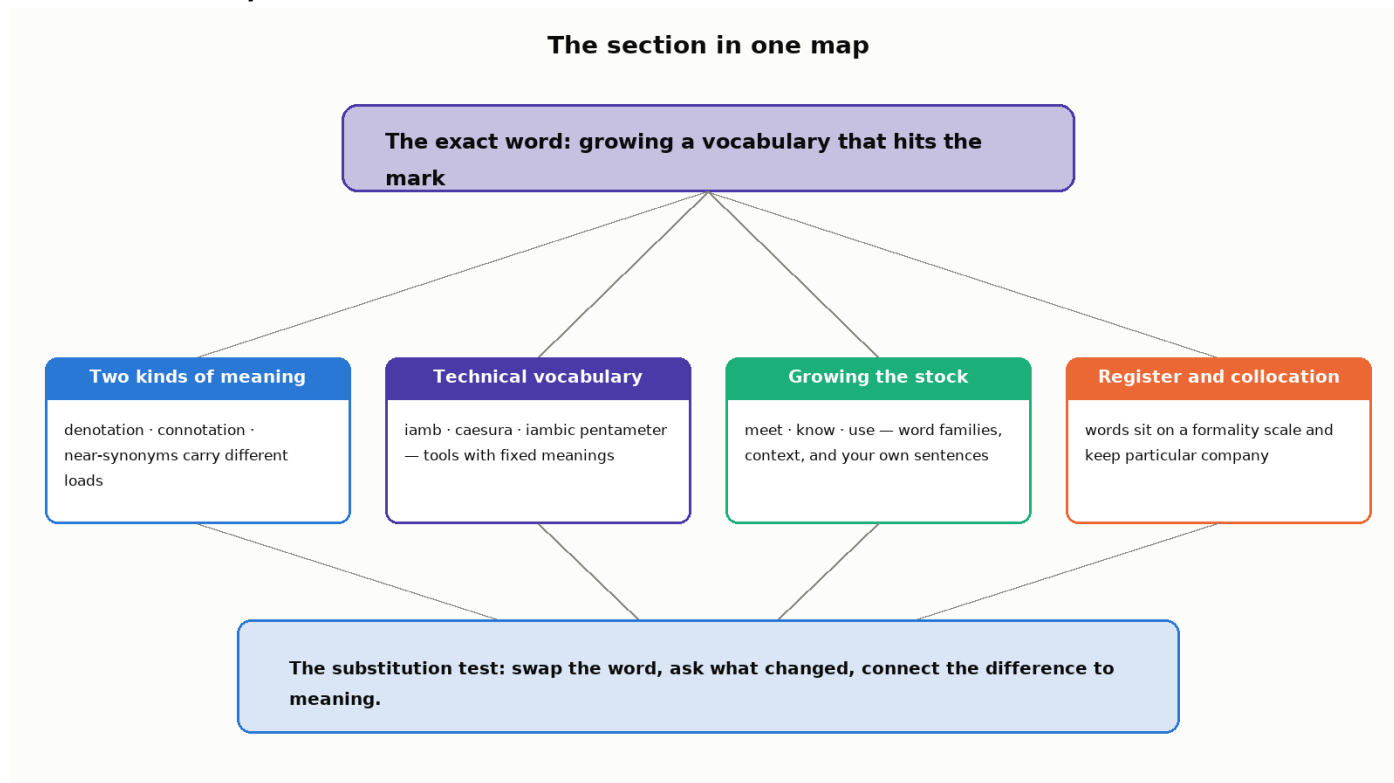
Each dawn he wound the clockwork, trimmed the wick,

and wrote one line: the light held through the night.

Three things to notice before the practice questions ask you to find your own. First, the harbour *held its breath and waited* — that is **personification**, the giving of human qualities to a non-human thing, and it turns the whole harbour into a held breath, which is how the watchman feels. Second, *the salted dark* packs two senses — taste and sight — into two words; the unpacked version (*the darkness that smelled of salt*) takes six and lands softer. Third, *the light held through the night* gives the word *held* double duty: the light stayed on, and the watchman held out. A poem can afford that packing; a news report usually cannot — and knowing when each can is part of precision.

Listen, too, for the sound. Line 1 walks in steady iambic pentameter; line 5 breaks its own flow with a full stop in the middle of the line — a **caesura** — so the two halves face each other the way the watchman and the sea do. The technical terms do not replace the feeling; they let you show exactly where the feeling comes from.

10. The section map



A concept map with the central claim “the exact word: growing a vocabulary that hits the mark”, four branches for two kinds of meaning covering denotation and connotation, technical vocabulary including iambic pentameter and caesura, growing the stock through word families context and use, and register and collocation, and a base node stating the substitution test: swap the word and ask what changed

Worked analyses

Worked analysis 1 — scaffolded (the substitution test)

Analyse the bold word: “The committee **handled** the complaint.”

Step	Analysis	Why it matters
Identify	The verb <i>handled</i> is the word doing the choosing.	One word at a time; hold the rest of the sentence still.
Define	<i>Handled</i> here means dealt with, processed — said without warmth or blame.	The shade is neutral: it reports, it does not judge.
Substitute	<i>received</i> (took it in, no action promised), <i>heard</i> (listened, maybe fairly), <i>dismissed</i> (judged it not worth answering), <i>buried</i> (hid it).	Each swap keeps the denotation roughly fixed and moves the judgement.
Connect	The writer chose the one verb that hides the committee’s attitude; the reader is left to ask what <i>handled</i> really meant.	The neutrality is itself a stance — it keeps the committee’s conduct a question.

Notice the shape of the finding: the writer’s meaning lives in the gap between *handled* and the word they did not choose. That is what it means to write *with precision* — the exact word carries the exact load, and a reader with a good ear hears the options it beat.

Worked analysis 2 — scaffolded (technical vocabulary)

Scan this couplet, written for this book, and name its metre. A **couplet** is two lines of verse, here rhyming.

*“The river carried lanterns to the sea,
and on the bridge the watchers let them be.”*

Step	Working	Comment
Count syllables	10 in each line (<i>car-ried</i> and <i>watch-ers</i> are two each).	Pentameter candidates.
Mark the stresses	the RIV-er CAR-ried LAN-terns TO the SEA; and ON the BRIDGE the WATCH-ers LET them BE.	Read each line at a natural pace; the strong beats fall every second syllable.
Group into feet	Five feet per line, each unstressed then stressed.	Five iambs.
Name the metre	Iambic pentameter , with the two lines rhyming (<i>sea</i> / <i>be</i>).	The technical name is the whole finding in two words.
Say the effect	The steady da-DUM pace moves like the river it describes — even, unhurried, going somewhere.	The metre is part of the meaning, not a fact about the poem.

Worked analysis 3 — unscaffolded (precision in a passage)

Analyse the vocabulary choices in this passage, written for this book:

“Dawn opened over the market. Vendors stacked crates with quick, practised hands. The air smelled of cut basil and warm bread. Somewhere a radio played, half-lost under the clatter of shutters being rolled up. Nobody announced the start of trading; the market simply began, the way a tide comes in.”

Identify and define. Three choices carry most of the weight. *Practised* means skilled through repetition — not *quick* alone, but *quick* because it has been done a thousand times. *Clatter* means a hard, rattling noise — metal on metal, nothing soft about it. *Simply began* does quiet work: *simply* says no ceremony, no starting signal. **Substitute.** Swap *practised* for *skilful* and the repetition is lost; swap *clatter* for *noise* and the metal is lost; drop *simply* and the sentence loses its point that a market is a thing that happens by itself. **Connect.** Every choice pushes the reader towards the same reading: the market is not a performance put on for anyone but a habit with its own weather — which is exactly the claim the final image (*the way a tide comes in*) makes out in the open. The precision is in the earlier words getting the reader there before the image arrives.

Worked analysis 4 — unscaffolded (two versions, one fact)

Same fact, two versions.

Version 1. *“The thing on the weekend was really good. Lots of people came and everyone had a nice time.”*

Version 2. *“The festival drew three hundred families to the foreshore, and by dusk the last of them left slowly, unwilling to go.”*

Version 1 leans on general words — *thing*, *good*, *lots*, *nice* — that could describe anything from a concert to a cake stall, and because they could describe anything, they describe nothing in particular. Version 2 chooses: *festival* names it, *drew* says the event had pull, *three hundred families* gives the size a shape, *foreshore* gives it a place, and *unwilling to go* reports the mood without ever writing *nice*. Neither version is dishonest; they are different instruments. Version 1 is the text you send a friend at the time; Version 2 is the opening of the report or feature. Precision is not about which version is smarter — it is about whether the words fit the job.

Practice questions

Scaffolded

Q1 (Reading and viewing). Each pair shares a denotation but not a load. State which word in each pair carries the warmer judgement, and in one clause say what the other word adds.

(a) *childlike* / *childish* (b) *confident* / *arrogant* (c) *thrifty* / *stingy* (d) *determined* / *stubborn* (e) *relaxed* / *lazy*

Q2 (Reading and viewing). Scan this line, written for this book: “*The ferry lights were moving down the bay.*” Mark the stressed syllables, count the feet, and name the metre.

Q3 (Reading and viewing). Match each original example to its term: *alliteration*, *assonance*, *sibilance*, *enjambment*.

(a) “*bright brass bells along the breakwater*” (b) “*the slow glow of the coals*” (c) “*the sea sat still*” (d) “*She waited past the hour / when the last train left.*”

Q4 (Writing). This sentence uses three general words: “*The game was good and the crowd was big and the players did well.*” Rewrite it, replacing *good*, *big* and *did well* with precise choices of your own, then list the three swaps you made.

Q5 (Writing). The words *glance*, *stare* and *gaze* share a denotation (to look). Write one sentence for each that shows what makes it different from the other two.

Q6 (Writing). Build the word family from the root *respect*: at least four members (look for different suffixes). Then write two sentences that use two members with different loads — for example, one approving and one critical.

Unscaffolded

Q7 (Reading and viewing). Use the four-step routine — identify, define, substitute, connect — to analyse the bold word: “*The old hall has **outlasted** every plan to pull it down.*”

Q8 (Reading and viewing). Scan this couplet, written for this book: “*The snow came down on every roof and lane, / and every sound was folded into one.*” Mark the stresses and name the metre, then state in one or two sentences what the steady beat does for the mood.

Q9 (Reading and viewing). Return to *The Watchman* in §9. Choose two words or phrases and run each through the routine. Then name one technical term — from the kit in §3 or from §4 — that helps you say something true about the poem’s sound, and use it in a sentence.

Q10 (Writing). The same message in two registers: *the training session has moved to Saturday morning*. Write it (a) as a text to a teammate and (b) as a notice on the club’s website. Finish with one sentence naming the words that mark the register in each version.

Q11 (Writing). Write your own rhyming couplet in iambic pentameter about weather — any weather. Then write one sentence saying what the steady beat adds to your lines.

Q12 (Speaking and listening). In pairs, run a substitution test aloud on these two versions: “*The letter arrived on Tuesday.*” / “*The letter reached her on Tuesday.*” One partner argues that *arrived* is the better verb, the other argues for *reached*; each must give the other verb its strongest case before landing their own. End with one agreed sentence on the difference.

Q13 (Speaking and listening). Prepare a two-minute talk: choose one precise word from a text your class is studying, run it through the four-step routine aloud, and close with one sentence on what the choice adds to the text’s meaning or style.

Q14 (Speaking and listening). Panel discussion: “*Long words damage clear writing.*” Argue for and against the motion with equal care. Marks reward the quality of the reasoning on each side — terms defined, claims tested on an example, limits admitted — not the conclusion you reach.

Answers

Q1. (a) *childlike* is the warmer word; *childish* adds a judgement of acting below one's age. (b) *confident* is warmer; *arrogant* adds disrespect for others. (c) *thrifty* is warmer; *stingy* adds meanness. (d) *determined* is warmer; *stubborn* adds refusal to listen. (e) *relaxed* is warmer; *lazy* adds unwillingness to work.

Q2. the FER-ry LIGHTS were MOV-ing DOWN the BAY — ten syllables, five feet, each unstressed then stressed: **iambic pentameter**.

Q3. (a) alliteration (the repeated *b* at the start of stressed syllables); (b) assonance (the repeated *o* vowel sound); (c) sibilance (the hissing *s* sounds); (d) enjambment (the sentence running past the line break).

Q4. Sample: “*The grand final was fierce, the stands were packed, and the backs outran their markers all afternoon.*” Swaps: *good* → *fierce*, *big* → *packed*, *did well* → *outran their markers*. Any precise choices earn the mark; the test is whether your words could only describe this game.

Q5. Sample: *She glanced at the clock and went back to her book.* (quick, once, no more than a second) *He stared at the notice until the words blurred.* (fixed, long, hard-eyed) *They gazed out over the water until the sun dropped.* (long, soft, dreaming). Each sentence should make the difference visible.

Q6. Family: *respect, respects, respectful, respectable, respected, disrespect, respectfully*. Sample pair: *Her teachers respected the care she took with drafts.* (approving) *He had a respectable record and nothing more.* (faint praise — the load is in *respectable*).

Q7–Q14. Open tasks — see the model responses below.

Model responses

Q7. Sample. *Identify*: the verb *outlasted*. *Define*: to last longer than something that is trying to end you — survival against opposition, not by accident. *Substitute*: *survived* loses the opponent — a plan is not trying to end you if you only survive; *outlived* fits living things better and softens the contest. *Connect*: *outlasted* sets the hall up as the quiet winner in a contest the sentence never has to name, and every plan that failed is listed in the same breath, so the hall's stubborn patience and the planners' repeated failure land in one word.

Q8. the SNOW came DOWN on EV-ry ROOF and LANE; and EV-ry SOUND was FOLD-ed IN-to ONE — ten syllables, five iambs per line: iambic pentameter. The beat is even and unbroken, the way the snowfall is; nothing in the line hurries or surprises, and the steadiness of the metre does the work the word *folded* begins — turning the scene into something hushed and settled.

Q9. Sample. First choice: *sweeping* in line 2 — a lantern does not sweep, but the word gives the light a slow, working motion, like a broom or a searchlight; *shining* would sit still and lose the labour. Second choice: *the salted dark* in line 4 — taste packed into sight in two words; *the darkness that smelled of salt* takes six and lands softer, so the compressed form does the work of the whole harbour scene in a breath. Technical term: line 5 carries a **caesura** — *He did not watch the sea. The sea watched him* — and the full stop in the middle of the line makes the two halves face each other like the two fighters the line describes.

Q10. Sample. **(a)** *Heads up — training's moved to Saturday morning, see you there.* **(b)** *Please note: this week's training session will now be held on Saturday morning.* Register markers: in (a), *heads up*, the dropped letters in *training's* and *see you there*; in (b), *please note, will now be held* and the full forms. The message is identical; the words signal the room.

Q11. Sample. “*The rain came in on every side at once, / and every roof returned its steady song.*” Ten syllables a line, five iambs, rhyming (*once* and *song* lean on each other as a near rhyme). The steady beat gives the downpour a kind of order — the weather is wild, but the line is not, and that gap is what makes the couplet feel like standing dry inside it.

Q12. A strong pair lands the difference in one agreed sentence, for example: *Arrived reports the letter; reached adds the person waiting for it — arrived is about the post, reached is about her.* The better argument on each side is the one that gives the other verb its due first: *arrived* is the neutral word when nobody's feelings are in the sentence; *reached* is the warmer one when a receiver matters.

Q13. A strong talk names the word and its source text, runs the four steps aloud — identify, define, substitute, connect — and closes with one effect sentence such as: *The writer chose the one verb that keeps the committee's attitude hidden, so the reader is left doing the suspecting.* The marking listens for the routine, not for a display of long words.

Q14. A strong panel opens each side in its strongest form. For the motion: long words reached for impressively blur meaning and hide the writer's choices; test it on a sentence like *the event was subsequently concluded*, where the length does no work a plain word would not. Against the motion: length is not the damage — wrongness is; many long words are the *only* precise ones (one cannot say much about iambic pentameter without *iambic pentameter*), and plain words used loosely — *good, nice, thing* — damage clarity more than any long word does. Marks reward each side for testing its case on an example and admitting its limit; two panellists reaching opposite conclusions can both deserve full marks.

Looking back. Vocabulary is not a list to be stacked but a set of choices to be made. Every word carries two layers — a denotation it shares with its near-synonyms and a connotation that belongs to it alone — and most of a writer's choosing happens at the second layer. Technical vocabulary gives the analyst tools with fixed meanings, from *iamb* to *caesura*, so that observations can be said exactly; words also carry register and company, and precision is knowing both. The stock grows through meeting words widely, knowing them through roots and context, and using them in your own sentences. And the test of any choice is the substitution test: swap the word, ask what changed, and connect the difference to meaning. That is the whole of the content description in one habit — understand the word, then use it with precision.

Punctuation: small marks, big meanings

Your friend texts back one word after you ask to swap shifts on Saturday: *Fine*. With the full stop, it reads calm — settled, done. Now picture the same word with three dots instead: *Fine...* Same word. Same sender. But the dots turn agreement into a door closing slowly, and you will think about that text for the rest of the day. Nothing changed except a mark, and the mark changed the meaning.

That is the work of this section. Punctuation is not only a set of rules to obey; it is a set of choices a writer makes, and every choice gives the reader an instruction — where to pause, what to notice, how to hear the words. You will study four families of marks — the **colon**, the **semicolon**, the **ellipsis** and **expressive punctuation** — first as a reader who can name what they do, then as a writer who uses them on purpose.

Curriculum focus

VC2E10LA09 (Language — Language for expressing and developing ideas)

Draws on

VC2E10LA09.E01, VC2E10LA09.E02, VC2E10LA09.E03

Builds on (Level 9)

VC2E9LA09

Modes in this section

Reading and viewing · Writing · Speaking and listening

What we mean by *effect*. The curriculum treats *effect* as the point of punctuation work but does not define the word. In this section, an **effect** is what a mark makes the reader do: where the reader pauses, what the reader is made to notice, and how the words sound in the reader's head. A mark is not “doing something” in the abstract — it is giving the reader a specific instruction. Every judgement in this section is answerable on that definition alone.

Theory

1. Marks are instructions, not just rules

In Level 9 you used punctuation as convention — the commas, apostrophes and quotation marks that keep writing clear, and the referencing marks that condense information and credit sources. That work is assumed here. Level 10 adds a second layer, and the verbs of the content description are **use** and **experiment**: you are asked both to choose marks on purpose and to play with what they can do.

A useful way to hold the whole section in your head is this: **every mark is an instruction to the reader**. A comma says *pause briefly, these pieces belong together*. A full stop says *stop, one idea is complete*. This section adds four more families of instruction to your toolkit, set out in Figure 1.

The marks in this section

Every mark is an instruction to the reader: where to pause, what to notice, how to hear the words.

the announcer — sets up what follows: a list, an unpacking, quoted words

:

"She packed three things: a torch, a rope, and her nerve."

the balance point — holds two complete, related clauses in one sentence

;

"The tide was out; the rocks were slippery."

the pause that speaks — hesitation, trailing off, a withheld beat

...

"I was going to tell you ... but it's too late now."

tone on the page — feeling the words alone do not carry

! ? !!

"You came back!"

The comma, full stop and quotation marks are assumed from earlier years; here they join a bigger toolkit.

Table of the four mark families this section works with — colon, semicolon, ellipsis and expressive marks — each with its core job and an original example

Two words in this section's title carry the analytic weight. **Meaning** is what changes when the mark changes — the *Fine*. / *Fine...* difference. **Effect** is the instruction the mark gives — the pause, the spotlight, the tone. Naming the mark is the first step; tracing its instruction is the analysis; judging whether the instruction suits the purpose is the evaluation.

2. The colon: the announcer

A **colon** is the mark of announcement. It says: what comes next proves, unpacks or delivers what came before. Its three main jobs are set out in Figure 2.

Three jobs of the colon

A colon says: what comes next proves, unpacks or delivers what came before.

1. Announce a list

The colon sets up a list. What comes before it must be able to stand as a full clause.

"The stall sold three things: honey, soap, and warm bread."

2. Unpack an idea

The colon introduces the detail that explains or renames what came before.

"Her plan had one weakness: it needed perfect weather."

3. Deliver quoted words

The colon hands the floor to speech or a quotation, more formally than a comma.

The judge looked up: "The decision is final."

Test: cover the colon and read both halves. If the first half cannot stand alone, the colon has no right to be there.

The three jobs of the colon — announce a list, unpack an idea, deliver quoted words — each with an original example

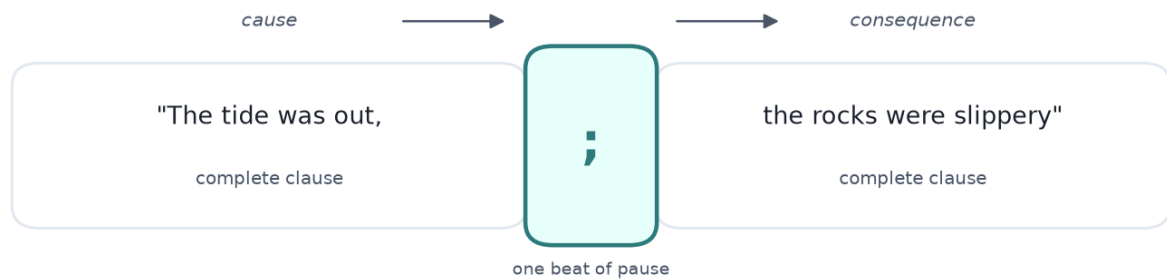
One rule guards all three jobs: **the words before a colon must be able to stand alone as a full clause.** *She packed three things:* can stand alone, so the colon earns its place. *The things she packed were:* cannot stand alone, so the colon is a mistake. The rule is not fussy detail for its own sake — it is what makes the announcement work. A reader who meets a full clause and then a colon feels the small lean-forward of something about to be delivered.

3. The semicolon: the balance point

A **semicolon** holds two complete clauses in one sentence when the ideas are close enough to belong together. It sits between the comma and the full stop: a longer pause than a comma, a shorter stop than a full stop. Figure 3 shows the balance, and what happens when the mark is wrong.

The semicolon: a balance point

Two complete clauses, close enough to belong together, independent enough to stand apart.



Semicolon

"The tide was out; the rocks were slippery."

One sentence. The two facts lean on each other: the reader feels the link.

Full stop

"The tide was out. The rocks were slippery."

Two sentences. The link still exists, but the reader has to build it alone.

Comma splice

watch it

"The tide was out, the rocks were slippery."

A comma is too weak to hold two complete clauses. This is an error, not a style.

Also a semicolon job: sorting long lists that already contain commas — 'teams from Geelong, Victoria; Nelson, New Zealand; and Kandy, Sri Lanka.'

Diagram of the semicolon as a balance point between two complete clauses, with the semicolon, full-stop and comma-splice versions compared

The bottom row names an error worth knowing by name. A **comma splice** is two complete clauses joined by nothing stronger than a comma — the comma is too weak to carry the join, and the sentence runs on like a ladder missing a rung. When you find one in your own draft, the repair is a choice: full stop (two ideas, stated separately), semicolon (two ideas, leaning on each other), or a joining word after the comma (*so, but, because*). Each repair is a different meaning, which is exactly the point.

The semicolon also sorts long lists that already contain commas, where a comma alone would blur the groups: *teams from Geelong, Victoria; Nelson, New Zealand; and Kandy, Sri Lanka*. Same mark, same job — keeping related pieces in their own boxes.

4. The ellipsis: the pause that speaks

An **ellipsis** is the three-dot mark (...) that puts a silence on the page. Its work is the work of a held beat, and Figure 4 sorts the four effects you will meet most often.

Four effects of the ellipsis

Three dots, four jobs. Each one makes the reader sit in a pause and do some of the work.

Hesitation

the speaker cannot quite commit to the words

"I think ... maybe we should tell her."

Trailing off

the sentence stops before it is finished, and the feeling keeps going

"If only I had been there ..."

The weighted beat

a pause held on purpose, before news lands

"The winner is ..."

Time passing

the gap between scenes, or between one thought and the next

"They walked on ... Hours later, the lights of the town appeared."

Contrast: a dash cuts speech off from outside ('I was going to say—'); an ellipsis lets it fade from inside.

The four effects of the ellipsis — hesitation, trailing off, the weighted beat and time passing — each with an original example

The first effect is the one the curriculum names directly. **Tentativeness** — the quality of holding back, of not quite committing to the words — is something a writer cannot state with an adverb without sounding clunky (*"he said hesitantly"*), but can build into the speech itself with three dots. *I think ... maybe we should tell her* does not describe hesitation; it performs it, and the reader hears the speaker's voice stop and restart.

A useful contrast: a **dash** cuts speech off from outside — *I was going to say—* — while an ellipsis lets speech fade from inside. The dash is an interruption; the ellipsis is a faltering. Writers choose between them the way a director chooses between a door slam and a voice going quiet.

5. Expressive punctuation: tone on the page

Some marks do not organise clauses at all; they carry **feeling**. **Expressive punctuation** is this section's term for marks that put tone on the page — the exclamation mark, the question mark used for attitude, repeated marks (!!, ?!, !!!), and the emojis that now sit beside them in messages. Figure 5 makes the point with a single word.

One word, four meanings

A friend asks if you can swap shifts on Saturday. The word never changes; the marks do.

Sure.

plain agreement; the full stop keeps it calm and settled

Sure?

the question mark turns agreement into doubt: is that really what you meant?

Sure!

the exclamation mark adds warmth — agreement with a smile in it

Sure ...

the ellipsis withholds: agreement, but something is coming

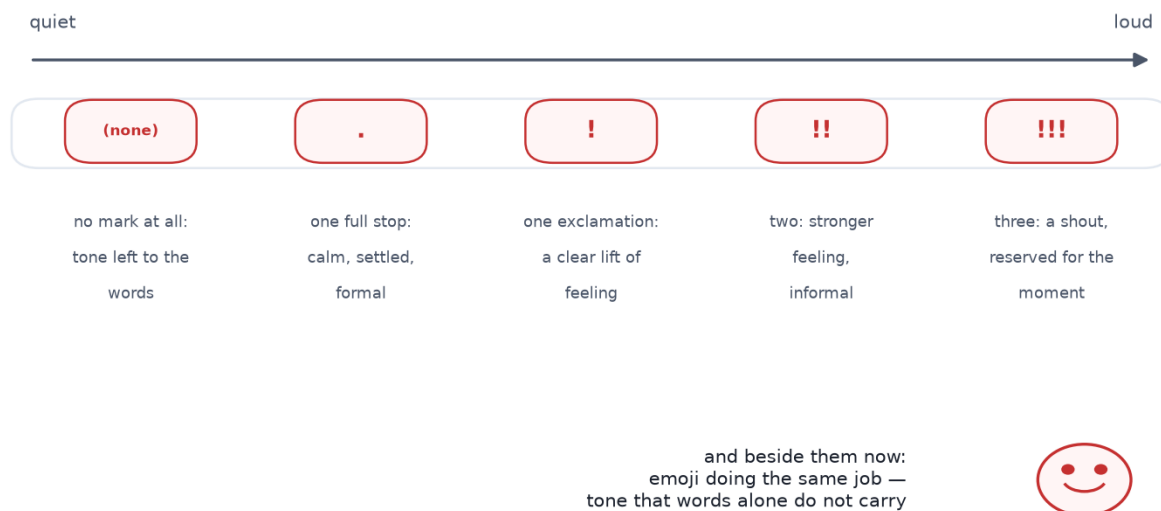
Same word. Different mark. Different meaning — that is the whole section in one line.

One word, four marks — the reply “Sure” with a full stop, question mark, exclamation mark and ellipsis, each reading differently

Expressive marks stand in for what print cannot show: the speaker’s voice, face and volume. A smiling-face emoji at the end of a message is doing the same job as an exclamation mark, only louder — it says *hear this warmly*. Because they carry volume, expressive marks live on a scale of formality, shown in Figure 6.

Expressive marks live on a scale

The further right you go, the louder the feeling — and the fewer the places that accept it.



Where each fits

A formal letter or an essay stays at the quiet end. A quick message to a friend can live at the loud end.

The craft is choosing by audience and purpose — and knowing that one mark lands harder than three.

Expressive marks carry tone the words do not. They are a resource — and a choice, not a habit.

Scale from quiet to loud showing no mark, one full stop, one exclamation mark, two, three, and a drawn smiling emoji, with notes on where each fits

Two views of expressive marks — both defensible.

The strongest case for discipline: volume marks spend their force when they are spent. A page where every sentence shouts has no peaks, and a single exclamation mark, saved for the moment that earns it, lands harder than three. Formal texts — letters, essays, reports — keep to the quiet end of the scale because their authority lives in the words, not the marks.

The strongest case for freedom: print stripped speech of its voice, and expressive marks hand some of it back. In a message, *fine.* and *fine!* are different speech acts, and the marks are the only way to tell them apart. Used with intent, a repeated mark or an emoji is precision, not sloppiness — it says exactly how the words are meant to sound.

Both views are correct because they describe different ends of one scale. The analytical question is never “are exclamation marks good or bad?” but **“does this mark suit this reader, this purpose, this place — and is it saved for a moment that earns it?”**

6. Same words, different marks, different meanings

Pull the four families together and the section’s claim stands in one line: **punctuation is meaning.** The same words, re-marked, say different things — a colon turns a statement into an announcement, a semicolon turns two facts into cause and consequence, an ellipsis turns agreement into a warning. When you analyse a text, the question is not *is the punctuation correct?* but *what is the punctuation doing?* And when you write, the marks are not the last thing you fix; they are among the first choices that shape what your reader feels.

7. Judging a punctuation choice: three questions

Every evaluation task in this section runs on one checklist (Figure 7) — the same three questions Chapter 2 uses for sentence structures, turned onto marks. When you judge a punctuation choice, answer in order:

Judging a punctuation choice: three questions

The same kit Chapter 2 uses for sentence structures, turned onto marks.

1. FOCUS

What does the mark put in the spotlight?

A colon spotlights whatever comes after it; an ellipsis spotlights what is left unsaid.

2. FIT

Does it suit the purpose, audience and formality?

A semicolon suits an essay; three exclamation marks suit a chat with friends — rarely the reverse.

3. FLOW

Does the pause help the text move?

The right mark sets a beat the reader can feel; the wrong one stalls the sentence or rushes it.

Naming the mark is analysis. Saying 'and it works because...' is evaluation.

Checklist of the three questions for judging a punctuation choice: focus, fit and flow

1. **Focus** — What does the mark put in the spotlight? A colon spotlights whatever follows it; an ellipsis spotlights what is left unsaid.
2. **Fit** — Does the mark suit the purpose, the audience and the formality? A semicolon belongs in an essay; three exclamation marks belong in a chat with friends — and rarely the other way round.
3. **Flow** — Does the pause help the text move? The right mark sets a beat the reader can feel; the wrong one stalls the sentence or hurries it.

Naming the mark is analysis. The second sentence — *and it works because...* or *and it fails because...* — is evaluation.

Worked examples

Example 1 — scaffolded

Task. Figure 8 is an exposition paragraph — a short text that takes a position and makes a case for it — written for this section, arguing that the school library should stay open later. It leans on colons and semicolons, and each mark is labelled with the writer's reason. The analysis table below is completed for you. Read it line by line, matching each quote to its mark and its effect.

One paragraph, two marks

An original exposition paragraph. Every colon and semicolon is labelled with the writer's reason.

Our case is simple : the library should stay open until six, not four.

Three reasons support this : students, study space, and safety.

First, many students cannot study at home ; the after-school room gives them a quiet table and a charged laptop.

Second, the library already has staff on site until six ; the cost is not new people but keeping the door open.

Third, walkers going home in the dark are safer on lit streets ; a later close keeps the block busy until the evening peak.

The answer is in our own timetable : open the door we are already paying for.

The writer's reasons

- 1 **Our case is simple :**
sets up the claim so it lands with a beat of pause
- 2 **Three reasons support this :**
announces the list the paragraph will unpack
- 3 **cannot study at home ; the room gives them ...**
balances a problem against its answer in one sentence
- 4 **staff on site until six ; the cost is ...**
holds cause and consequence together without a full stop
- 5 **safer on lit streets ; a later close ...**
links the reason to its effect at walking pace
- 6 **The answer is in our own timetable :**
unwraps the conclusion like a verdict

The marks do the pacing: colons announce, semicolons balance, and the argument never stops to breathe twice.

Annotated model exposition paragraph about keeping the library open later, with every colon and semicolon labelled with the writer's reason

Quote from the paragraph	Mark	What it does for the reader
"Our case is simple:"	colon	Announces the claim so it arrives with a beat of pause — the reader leans forward before the claim lands.
"Three reasons support this:"	colon	Promises a list, so the reader expects structure and tracks the three points as they arrive.
"cannot study at home; the after-school room gives them"	semicolon	Balances a problem against its answer in one sentence, so solution follows trouble without a full stop breaking the link.
"staff on site until six; the cost is not new people"	semicolon	Holds cause and consequence together: the second clause answers the first at walking pace.
"safer on lit streets; a later close keeps the block busy"	semicolon	Links reason to result, making the safety point feel like a consequence rather than a separate claim.

Quote from the paragraph	Mark	What it does for the reader
“The answer is in our own timetable.”	colon	Unwraps the conclusion like a verdict — the most persuasive colon in the paragraph, saved for last.

The point to copy: each row does three things — it quotes the exact words, names the mark precisely, and states the effect in terms of what the reader feels (a pause, a spotlight, a link). Notice too the craft choice underneath: the colons announce, the semicolons balance, and not one adverb is needed to make the argument feel paced.

Example 2 — scaffolded

Task. Figure 9 is a scene written for this section: Milo must tell the coach what happened to the trophy. The ellipses build tentativeness into his speech, and the table glosses each pause.

Hesitation, three dots at a time

An original scene: Milo must tell the coach what happened. Each ellipsis is labelled.

Coach, I need to tell you something... it's about the trophy.

It wasn't stolen ... not really.

I only borrowed it ... for one night ... to show my sister.

I brought it back ... but the case was already empty when I got there.

I know I should have said sooner ... I just didn't know how.

What each pause does

- 1 the first ellipsis buys time: Milo starts before he is ready
- 2 'not really' arrives late, hedged — the truth is being softened
- 3 two beats inside one confession: each fact costs him something
- 4 the ellipsis before the bad news holds the scene still
- 5 the final pause is not hesitation any more; it is shame

No adverb says 'nervously'. The ellipses do the work — the reader hears the pauses.

Model dialogue in which Milo confesses to the coach, with each ellipsis highlighted and numbered

Marked pause	What it does
“I need to tell you something ...”	Buys time. Milo starts before he is ready, and the first pause tells the reader this will cost him.
“It wasn’t stolen ... not really.”	Softens the truth. The correction arrives late, hedged, and the hesitation makes the confession feel dragged out of him.
“I only borrowed it ... for one night ... to show my	Two beats inside one confession. Each fact is paid for

Marked pause	What it does
sister.”	with a pause, so the reader feels the weight of each admission.
“I brought it back ... but the case was already empty”	The weighted beat. The pause holds the scene still an instant before the worst news lands.
“I know I should have said sooner ... I just didn’t know how.”	The final pause is not hesitation any more; it is shame. The dots have done their work, so the last line can say it plainly.

Notice the pattern: not one word tells the reader how Milo feels. The ellipses perform the feeling instead of describing it — the reader hears the pauses and supplies the emotion, which is always stronger than being told it.

Example 3 — unscaffolded

Task. Figure 10 shows one fact — the school trip has moved to Friday — dressed in four punctuation styles. No scaffold is given.

One message, four wardrobes

The school trip is moved to Friday. Same fact, four punctuation styles. Match each to its audience.

A

Version A

"Notice: the Year 10 trip has been moved to Friday; students should arrive at the usual time."

B

Version B

"The trip is moving to Friday. The bus leaves at nine, and the plan stays the same."

C

Version C

"Trip's moved to Friday!! Same time, same plan — see you there!"

D

Version D

"so ... trip's Friday now ... which means I can come after all"

Same fact, four texts. The marks are doing the dressing: each version suits a different reader, purpose and place.

The same notice about the trip moving to Friday written four ways, as versions A to D, colour-coded by style

- Match each version to the reader it suits best: the school office noticeboard, the school newsletter, the team chat, and a text to one friend. Say which mark or marks gave each answer away.
- Choose the version you judge most effective for its reader, and defend it using the three questions — focus, fit, flow.

- (c) Write a fifth version of the same fact for a parent who cannot read the notice until late, and state in one sentence why you chose its marks.

Pointers to structure your answer:

- Start with a one-line claim: the four versions carry the same fact but not the same reader.
- Give each match one sentence of reasoning that names a mark.
- For part (c), name the reader first — a parent reading late wants something specific — then pick the marks that deliver it.

A model opening, to show the shape — finish it yourself:

All four versions report one change, but each one points the reader somewhere different. Version A fronts the authority with its colon, because...

Practice questions

Scaffolded

Q1. For each sentence, name the mark (colon, semicolon or ellipsis) and the job it is doing, using Figures 1, 2, 3 and 4.

- (a) The recipe needs three things: flour, eggs, and patience.
- (b) Her answer had one flaw: it was not true.
- (c) The captain stood up: “We sail at dawn.”
- (d) The power went out; the whole street went dark.
- (e) I was going to call you ... but then I changed my mind.

Q2. Each sentence below is a comma splice. Repair it twice — once with a semicolon, once with a full stop — and say in one clause what each repair does to the link between the ideas.

- (a) The bell rang, nobody moved.
- (b) We trained all term, the final was still a surprise.
- (c) The tank was empty, the fish were fine.

Q3. Join each pair of clauses with a colon or a semicolon, whichever fits the relationship, and name the job from Figures 2 and 3.

- (a) The verdict was clear / the jury had listened well
- (b) One rule covers the lab / no food, no drink, no open flames
- (c) The road was closed / the creek had taken the bridge

Q4. Each line below is flat. Add one ellipsis to each so the speaker sounds tentative, and state in one clause what the pause adds.

- (a) I think we should tell the teacher.
- (b) It was probably just the wind.
- (c) We could maybe start without her.

Q5. A teacher asks a student to stay back after class. The student replies with one word, “Okay”, four different ways. Using Figure 5 as your model, describe the tone each reply carries.

- (a) Okay.
- (b) Okay?
- (c) Okay!
- (d) Okay ...

Q6. Read the passage below, then answer the questions.

The noticeboard

The noticeboard said three things: trials on Tuesday, uniforms by Friday, and one more item nobody expected. The list had been up all term; nobody had looked at it twice. But under the usual notices someone had written a name, and after the name hung three dots ...

“It’s not finished,” Mia said. “The dots mean there is more coming.” “Or they mean nothing,” said Theo. “People leave dots everywhere!” The bell went. The corridor filled. And the board kept its third secret for one more day.

- (a) Find the colon and name its job.
- (b) Find the semicolon and say what the mark makes the reader feel about the two clauses.
- (c) Find the ellipsis. Which of the four effects from Figure 4 is it doing, and how do you know?
- (d) Find the exclamation mark. Judge it with the three questions: does it suit its reader, purpose and place?

Q7. Here is a flat announcement about a working bee. It is correct and completely dull.

On Saturday the school will hold a working bee. We will plant trees. We will paint the fence. We will fix the gate. Please bring gloves. Please bring water. Thank you.

Rewrite it as a lively notice of five to seven sentences. Your rewrite must include:

- (a) one colon that announces a list or unpacks an idea;
- (b) one semicolon that balances two related clauses;
- (c) one expressive choice that suits a notice to a school community.

Under each new mark, write one clause saying why you chose it.

Q8. (*Speaking and listening.*) Work with a partner. Read the scene in Figure 9 aloud twice: first exactly as written, then with every ellipsis replaced by a full stop. Same words, same reader order, same pace otherwise. Discuss: what did the pauses give the first reading that the second lost? Where did the character change? Use at least one of the three questions — focus, fit, flow — and agree on one shared judgement you can give the class. Protocol: each person speaks first on one question; build on your partner’s points (“I agree, and I’d add...”); disagree with reasons, not with voices raised.

Un scaffolded

Q9. Look again at the scene in Figure 9. Write a paragraph of six to eight sentences answering:

How do the ellipses build tentativeness in Milo's speech?

Structure your paragraph with a claim, at least two quotes from the scene, and an effect sentence after each quote. The model paragraph in the fully-worked solutions is colour-coded in Figure 11 so you can see the shape before you write.

The shape of an analytical paragraph
A model paragraph answering: how do the ellipses build tentativeness in Milo's speech?

 **Claim**  **Quote**  **Effect sentence**  **Closing link**

The scene builds tentativeness by making the reader wait for the truth, one pause at a time.

Milo's confession opens mid-step — "Coach, I need to tell you something ... it's about the trophy."

— and the ellipsis shows him starting before he is ready, so the reader feels the gap between knowing and saying.

Later, the pauses multiply inside a single sentence, "I only borrowed it ... for one night ... to show my sister."

The reader pays for every fact with a wait.

Each beat withholds the next fact, and the hesitation stops being a mannerism and becomes the point.

By the closing line, "I just didn't know how" needs no dots,

because the pauses have already said what the words cannot.

Claim (purple) states the argument. Quotes (amber) are exact words from the text.
Effect sentences (blue) say what each quote does to the reader. The closing link (green) returns to the question.

Model analytical paragraph colour-coded to show the claim, the quotes, the effect sentences and the closing link

Q10. Here is a draft exposition paragraph with its marks misused or missing.

Our garden project is a success it grows food, it teaches patience, and it brings the school together. We grow three things tomatoes, herbs, and beans. The beds were built last term they were painted this term. Everyone should join!

- Find the comma splices and the places where a colon is missing.
- Rewrite the paragraph with correct, purposeful punctuation — at least two colons or semicolons must earn their place.
- In two sentences, justify your two biggest changes using focus, fit or flow.

Q11. Write a crafted piece of six to ten sentences on this stimulus — or one of your own choosing:

The moment before the winner is read out.

Your piece must use at least one colon, one semicolon and one ellipsis, each chosen for a reason. After the piece, write one sentence of intent for each mark: what you wanted the reader to feel, and why that mark delivers it.

Q12. (*Speaking and listening.*) In groups of three or four, run an editing session. Take the flat announcement from Q7 and the best rewrite your group can produce (build one together if you have not finished Q7). Read both versions aloud — one reader per version, same pace. Then apply the three questions and agree on a single group judgement: which version is more effective, and on which of the three questions does the decision turn? Each group reports its

judgement and its single strongest reason. Listeners: note whether the group's reason names a mark and an effect, or only a feeling.

Q13. Consider this claim:

“Multiple exclamation marks and emojis are ruining writing.”

Write a reasoned response. You must:

- give the strongest version of the case *for* the claim — what its defenders would actually say;
- give the strongest version of the case *against* it — what its critics would actually say;
- then state your own position: are expressive marks a resource or a decline — and what test separates a good use from a bad one?

Use the definitions of *effect* and *expressive punctuation* given in this section, and the scale in Figure 6. You are marked on the quality of your reasoning — defined terms, real examples, honest limits — not on which side you land on. Whichever side you favour, spend equal effort on the other one.

Q14. Over one week, collect three expressive marks and one colon or semicolon from texts you actually meet — a group chat, a club post, a news app, a notice at school, a review. For each find, record:

- the sentence, word for word, and where it came from;
- the mark, named precisely;
- your judgement, in one or two sentences: does the mark suit its reader, purpose and place, using focus, fit and flow?

Bring your finds to class ready to defend one judgement. If a find turns out to be a comma splice after all, keep it anyway, name it correctly, and say how you tested it.

Answers

These are sample answers. For open questions, any response that meets the task is acceptable.

Q1. (a) colon — announces a list. (b) colon — unpacks an idea (the flaw is named after the mark). (c) colon — delivers quoted words. (d) semicolon — balances cause and consequence in one sentence. (e) ellipsis — hesitation, or the weighted beat before a change of mind.

Q2. Samples. (a) “The bell rang; nobody moved.” — the semicolon makes the stillness feel like a consequence of the bell; with a full stop (“The bell rang. Nobody moved.”) the two facts stand apart and the reader builds the link alone. (b) “We trained all term; the final was still a surprise.” — the semicolon sets up the contrast inside one sentence; the full-stop version states the contrast more flatly. (c) “The tank was empty; the fish were fine.” — the semicolon makes the second clause land as a relief answering the first; the full-stop version withholds the link.

Q3. (a) semicolon — balance: the verdict and the listening lean on each other. (b) colon — announce a list. (c) semicolon — balance of cause and consequence (a colon also works if the writer wants the second clause to land as the announced explanation; accept either with reasoning).

Q4. Samples. (a) “I think ... we should tell the teacher.” — the pause makes the speaker sound unsure of the choice. (b) “It was probably ... just the wind.” — the hesitation before *just* shows the speaker trying to convince themselves. (c) “We could maybe start ... without her.” — the pause marks the part of the plan the speaker does not like.

Q5. (a) flat agreement, or wariness — the full stop keeps it closed and calm. (b) doubt or worry — the question mark turns the word into *okay, but why?* (c) bright agreement — the exclamation adds warmth or energy. (d) held-back agreement — the ellipsis says there is more the student is not saying.

Q6. (a) “The noticeboard said three things:” — the colon announces the list. (b) “The list had been up all term; nobody had looked at it twice.” — the semicolon makes the neglect feel like the consequence of the list’s age; the reader feels the link without being told it. (c) The ellipsis after the name is the weighted beat (or trailing off): the mark withholds the rest of the message, which is exactly the mystery the passage is built on — Mia reads it the same way (“there is more coming”). (d) Theo’s “everywhere!” suits a spoken line between friends in a corridor (fit); it gives his dismissal energy (focus); and it breaks the passage’s quiet rhythm on purpose (flow) — or, judged stricter, it is the one loud mark in a quiet scene, which is defensible because it is his character, not the narrator’s voice.

Q7. See the fully-worked solutions for one model rewrite. Reward one purposeful colon, one balancing semicolon, one expressive choice that suits a school notice (a single exclamation mark saved for the end, not a string of them), and a reason under each.

Q8. Teacher observation of the pair judgement. Look for: students hearing that the full-stop reading makes Milo sound rehearsed or flat, while the ellipses make him sound like he is paying for each word; a judgement that names what the pauses do (they withhold, they soften, they slow); use of at least one of focus, fit, flow. A strong pair notices that the last line changes very little between readings — the pauses have already done the work.

Q9. See the fully-worked solutions and Figure 11. A sound paragraph makes a claim about how the ellipses perform hesitation rather than describe it, quotes at least two pauses, and gives each quote an effect sentence.

Q10. (a) Splices: “is a success it grows food” needs a stop between clauses (and “it grows food, it teaches patience, and it brings the school together” is a list of clauses joined by commas); “last term they were painted” is a splice. Missing colons: before “tomatoes, herbs, and beans” and, if you wish, before the list of the project’s three benefits. (b) See the fully-worked solutions. (c) Reward justifications that name what the reader feels — for example, the colon before the list makes the harvest the announced payoff of the claim.

Q11. See the fully-worked solutions for a model piece and intent statements. Reward all three marks present, each with a reason that names what the reader is meant to feel.

Q12. Teacher observation. Look for: both versions read aloud at the same pace; a group judgement that names at least one mark and its effect, not only a preference; listeners checking whether the reason names a mark.

Q13. Marked on reasoning, not conclusion. A strong response defines its terms (effect, expressive punctuation); gives the case for the claim in real strength (volume marks flatten when overused; a shout on every sentence leaves no

peaks; formal places owe the reader the quiet end of the scale); gives the case against in real strength (print cannot show tone, and expressive marks are the only way a message can say *hear this warmly*; used with intent they are precision); then takes a position with a test — for example, an expressive mark is a resource when it suits the reader and the place and is saved for a moment that earns it, and a decline when it is a habit. Responses that attack only one side, or conclude without reasons, score low whichever side they pick.

Q14. Answers will vary. Reward three real expressive marks and one colon or semicolon, each with source, precise name and a judgement using focus, fit or flow. A find that turns out differently after testing (“I thought this was a semicolon balancing two clauses, but the second half cannot stand alone, so it is a splice”) is still worth full marks for that item if you name it honestly.

Fully-worked solutions

Q2 — reasoning. The semicolon and the full stop both repair a splice, but they do different work. The semicolon keeps the two clauses in one sentence so the reader feels one idea leaning on the other — in (a), the stillness of the room reads as the bell’s doing. The full stop separates the facts and hands the link to the reader, which can be a colder, harder effect — sometimes exactly what a writer wants. A repair is therefore never neutral: choosing it is choosing a meaning.

Q7 — model rewrite.

This Saturday, our school holds its working bee: trees to plant, a fence to paint, and a gate that finally gets fixed. The trees come from the council nursery; the paint was left over from last year’s hall, so the day costs little and gives much. Bring gloves, bring water, and bring a friend who owes you a favour. Jobs suit every year level; even the smallest hands can carry a watering can. The gate has waited three years — give it one morning!

Colon (“holds its working bee:”) announces the day’s jobs as a promised list. Semicolons (“nursery; the paint...”) balance where each thing comes from against what it means, so the thrift of the day reads as one idea. The single exclamation mark, saved for the last line, is the one loud beat the notice earns.

Q9 — model analytical paragraph (this is the paragraph colour-coded in Figure 11).

The scene builds tentativeness by making the reader wait for the truth, one pause at a time. Milo’s confession opens mid-step — “Coach, I need to tell you something ... it’s about the trophy.” — and the ellipsis shows him starting before he is ready, so the reader feels the gap between knowing and saying. Later, the pauses multiply inside a single sentence: “I only borrowed it ... for one night ... to show my sister.” The reader pays for every fact with a wait. Each beat withholds the next fact, and the hesitation stops being a mannerism and becomes the point. By the closing line, “I just didn’t know how” needs no dots, because the pauses have already said what the words cannot.

The claim states the argument; two quotes carry the evidence; each quote is followed by an effect sentence naming what the pause makes the reader feel (wait, pay, withhold); the closing link returns to the question.

Q10(b) — model rewrite.

Our garden project is a success: it grows food, it teaches patience, and it brings the school together. We grow three things: tomatoes, herbs, and beans. The beds were built last term; they were painted this term. Everyone should join — the garden gives back what you give it.

The first colon turns an assertion into an announcement: the reasons arrive as the promised proof of the claim. The semicolon balances two stages of the same project in one sentence, so the garden reads as a story with a before and an after rather than two unrelated facts. The dash and plain close replace the exclamation mark, because a notice that ends by shouting *join!* asks for energy the paragraph has not earned.

Q11 — model piece and intent statements.

The hall went quiet for the reading of the prize: one name, one envelope, one long breath. The principal opened the card; the microphone crackled once. I heard my own name in my head, and then I heard it in the room ... said twice before I believed it. The applause came from somewhere far away; my hands stayed on my knees. Someone behind me whispered my name; I did not turn around. It was the pause, not the name, that I will remember.

Intent: the colon (“the reading of the prize:”) announces the small stage the moment is set on. The semicolons balance the room’s actions against the narrator’s stillness, so the outside and the inside lean on each other. The ellipsis (“in the room ... said twice”) performs the gap between hearing and believing — the tentativeness is the point, so the mark does the feeling.

Q13 — model structure.

For: Writing is a contract about tone, and expressive marks break it. A reader is owed a steady scale: when every message arrives shouting, nothing is a shout, and the one moment that deserves force has none left to borrow. Formal places make this explicit — an essay with !!! has asked the marks to do work the argument should do. On this view, the decline is real, and its mechanism is inflation: marks spent everywhere are worth nowhere.

Against: The claim mistakes a new resource for a decline. Print took the voice out of writing, and expressive marks — exclamation marks, repeats, emojis — are how a message says *hear this warmly* or *this is a joke* across a screen. Used with intent, they are the most precise tone marks we have: *fine.* and *fine!* are different speech acts, and only the mark tells them apart. The failure is not the marks but the habit — a default !! on every line, which is what the critics are really seeing.

Position (sample): Expressive marks are a resource that decays into a decline exactly when they stop being choices. The test is the scale: does the mark suit the reader and the place, and is it saved for a moment that earns it? A single exclamation mark kept for the one line that matters is craft; a string of them on every line is noise. The marks are not ruining writing — unexamined habit is.

Note that the model takes a position — yours may differ, and a well-reasoned opposite position scores equally. What is marked: defined terms, both sides at full strength, a position with a test, and honest limits.

Q12 — what a strong group judgement contains.

- A clear verdict on which version is more effective, stated in one sentence.
- The question the decision turned on — usually *fit* (a notice to a school community sits mid-way on the scale) or *focus* (what each version spotlights).
- At least one named mark with an effect: “the colon hands the reader the day’s jobs as a promised list; the flat version buries them in sentences.”
- A fair word for the losing version: the flat announcement is clear and complete, which is why it would survive in a formal record even if it never moves a reader.

Section 2E · English 10 · Curriculum reference: VC2E10LA09, drawing on VC2E10LA09.E01, VC2E10LA09.E02 and VC2E10LA09.E03. Builds on VC2E9LA09 (Level 9). Every exposition paragraph, dialogue, notice, statement and passage in this section was written for this book.

Check C2 — Literary craft: voice and devices

Book and band. ClassBasics English 10 · Victorian Curriculum F–10 Version 2.0, English, **Level 10** (Year 10).

Chapter and topic coverage. Hosted by Chapter 3 — *Literature: examining and creating literature*. The voice construction draws on Section 3F (crafting texts that hold one voice — the five dials: person and viewpoint, diction, sentence rhythm, tone, imagery). The craft analysis draws on Section 3D (how structure, language, devices and other texts steer a reading) and Section 3E (voice as a device — narrative position, feeling and craft).

Content descriptions assessed.

Section	Code
3F (primary)	VC2E10LE06 — create texts with a sustained voice, selecting and adapting literary text structures and devices, and language, auditory and visual features for purposes and audiences (evidenced here by scaffolded voice construction)
3D	VC2E10LE04 — analyse how text structure, language features, literary devices and intertextual connections shape interpretations of literary texts
3E	VC2E10LE05 — compare and evaluate how ‘voice’ as a literary device is used in a range of texts to evoke emotional responses and to create aesthetic qualities

Mark total and section structure. 20 marks. This check builds on two model literary passages, both printed inside the check: an original prose-fiction piece in a marked voice, and a public-domain poem, cited.

Section	Family	Task type	Marks
A — Model 1: an original prose-fiction piece	F12 / F10	continuation choices ×4 · voiced-passage cloze (3 blanks) · register marking · tone and position choices ×2	10
B — Model 2: a public-domain poem (cited)	F10 / F11	device ↔ effect matching (4 slots) · analytical paragraph ordering (4 slots)	8
C — The two texts together	F10	intertextual connection choices ×2	2

Timing guidance. 25 minutes. This is a classroom check, not an examination; the time is guidance only.

Permitted materials. None. Both model passages are printed inside the check. No dictionary, no notes.

Conditions.

- This check is completed online as an automatically marked quiz. Your answers are marked by the platform and your result is exported to your teacher.
- Reading support: your teacher will read the general instructions aloud. No item content will be read aloud or explained.
- **This is a school-designed instrument written for this book. It is not a VCAA instrument and has not been produced, endorsed or reviewed by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority.**

Instructions.

- Answer every question. There is no penalty for an incorrect answer.

- In multiple-choice and fill-in-the-blanks questions, choose the **one** best answer.
- In *mark the words* tasks, select the one word the question asks for.
- In ordering and matching tasks, one mark is awarded per slot correctly filled.

Section A — Model 1: an original prose-fiction piece in a marked voice (10 marks)

Read Text 1, then answer Tasks 1–8. Text 1 was written for this check. In this section, **voice** means what Section 3F teaches: the sense of a distinct speaker coming through a text, built from five dials — person and viewpoint, diction (word choice), sentence rhythm, tone (the attitude heard through the wording) and imagery. A voice is **sustained** when the same speaker seems audible from first line to last; **drift** is a line that sounds like a different speaker took over.

Text 1 — ‘Embers’ (original prose fiction).

Grandpa says a fire is a clock. You feed it before it asks, he says. Never after.

This is the last night in the house. The removalists come at eight, and the rooms already wear that surprised look rooms get when the shelves go. Grandpa does not say anything about it. He keeps the fire going instead.

He shows me how to bank it for the night. Two big logs like bookends. Ash raked forward like a blanket. ‘In me thou see’st the glowing of such fire,’ he says, not looking up. That is his way — dropping a line of an old poem into a sentence like it was the weather. The poet wrote it about growing old, he says. About ashes.

Outside, the streetlight finds the bare patch of lawn where the elm was. The fire ticks and settles.

‘You’ll take the fire somewhere,’ I say. It comes out wrong, and I hear it the moment it lands.

He looks at me the way he looks at weather. No blame. Just reading it.

‘Fires move,’ he says. ‘That is the whole trick of them.’

Tasks 1–4 — voice-consistent continuation (1 mark each)

For each task, the writer continues Text 1 at the point named. Choose the continuation that best sustains the voice of Text 1 — the same speaker, the same dials.

Task 1. The writer continues immediately after the first paragraph (‘...Never after.’). Which sentence follows?

- A. The rituals surrounding home heating hold deep significance for many families.
- B. This is the last night in the house. The removalists come at eight.
- C. My heart shattered into a thousand burning pieces as the awful truth consumed me.
- D. The property was sold last month, with settlement due on Friday.

Task 2. The writer continues immediately after ‘He keeps the fire going instead.’ Which sentence follows?

- A. Banking a fire correctly requires attention to airflow and fuel density.
- B. For many grandparents, passing on practical skills is a way of expressing love.
- C. He shows me how to bank it for the night. Two big logs like bookends.
- D. Tears streamed down my face as the weight of farewell crushed my soul.

Task 3. The writer continues immediately after ‘It comes out wrong, and I hear it the moment it lands.’ Which sentence follows?

- A. He looks at me the way he looks at weather. No blame. Just reading it.
- B. The silence between us screamed louder than any words ever could.
- C. Misunderstandings like this one are common between generations.
- D. He did not reply, and the interaction concluded shortly afterwards.

Task 4. Which ending best closes the passage in the same voice?

- A. And with that, we both understood everything there was to understand about loss.
- B. Studies show that moving house ranks among life’s most stressful events.
- C. The fire burned beautifully that night, a symbol of our enduring love.
- D. ‘That is the whole trick of them.’ The fire ticks, and settles, and keeps time.

Task 5 — voiced-passage cloze (3 marks — 1 mark per correctly filled blank)

The passage below continues Text 1 the next morning, in the same voice. Choose the option for each blank that sustains the voice.

The truck comes at eight, same as promised. The fire is [1] by then — just the ash’s grey blanket, and one log keeping its small red line. Grandpa stands at the gate with his hat in his hands. He does not [2] the house goodbye. He nods at it once, the way you nod at [3]

Blank 1 options: *cold · decommissioned · concluded*

Blank 2 options: *say · articulate · deliver*

Blank 3 options: *weather · a valued residential property · a significant chapter of one’s life*

Task 6 — register consistency (1 mark)

The passage below continues Text 1 in the same voice, but one word sounds like a different speaker took over the keyboard — Section 3F calls that drift. Mark that word.

Grandpa measures the tea the way he measures everything — one spoon per cup, and one for the pot. He calls that extra spoon the pot’s share. Furthermore, he says a fire kept overnight wants its breakfast early.

Task 7 — tone identification (1 mark)

Tone is the attitude we can hear in a voice. The tone of Text 1 is best described as

- A. triumphant — the narrator celebrates a victory.
- B. bitter — the narrator blames someone for the sale of the house.
- C. dry and tender — affection held steady, kept just under the surface.
- D. panicked — the narrator rushes through the night in fear.

Task 8 — narrative position (1 mark)

The narrator of Text 1 is a young person telling the night from inside it, understanding only partly — the reader understands more than the speaker says. Per Section 3E, a voice standing in this position mainly evokes

- A. sympathy — the reader fills the gap between what the speaker reports and what the reader understands.
- B. suspense — the reader must find out who sold the house.
- C. admiration — the reader is shown how skilfully the removalists work.
- D. laughter — the passage is written to be a comedy.

Section B — Model 2: a public-domain poem, cited (8 marks)

Read Text 2, then answer Tasks 9–10. Text 2 is in the public domain and is cited below. A **device** is a deliberate technique that adds a layer of meaning on top of the literal one; a **metaphor** is a comparison that says one thing is another; **imagery** is language that builds pictures for the senses; **personification** gives human habits to what is not human.

Text 2 — Sonnet 73 (William Shakespeare, *Sonnets*, 1609 — public domain).

That time of year thou mayst in me behold When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang Upon those boughs which shake against the cold, Bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang. In me thou see'st the twilight of such day As after sunset fadeth in the west; Which by and by black night doth take away; Death's second self, that seals up all in rest. In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire That on the ashes of his youth doth lie, As the death-bed whereon it must expire, Consumed with that which it was nourished by. This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more strong, To love that well which thou must leave ere long.

Task 9 — device ↔ effect matching (4 marks — 1 mark per correctly matched slot)

Match each quoted line of Text 2 to the effect its device creates. Drag one effect label into each slot. One effect label will not be used.

- **Quote 1.** 'Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang'
- **Quote 2.** 'In me thou see'st the twilight of such day / As after sunset fadeth in the west'
- **Quote 3.** 'Death's second self, that seals up all in rest'
- **Quote 4.** 'That on the ashes of his youth doth lie, / As the death-bed whereon it must expire'

Effect labels: 'A metaphor: what once sang in him now stands bare and empty, like a stripped church in winter.' · 'Imagery of fading light: life going by degrees toward night.' · 'Death imagined as sleep's twin, quietly closing everything in rest.' · 'A fire metaphor: life burning down on the ashes of its own youth, consuming what it rests on.' · 'A generalisation about spring, promising that everything recovers.'

Quote	Effect
Quote 1	
Quote 2	
Quote 3	
Quote 4	

Task 10 — analytical paragraph ordering (4 marks — 1 mark per correctly placed sentence)

The four sentences below form one analytical paragraph about the structure of Text 2 — one topic sentence, one sentence of evidence, one of analysis, and one that links back to the poem's meaning. Section 3D: structure shapes interpretation, and an analytical paragraph moves from claim to evidence to what the evidence does. Arrange the sentences.

- **W.** Each image holds less time than the one before it, so the reader feels the years narrowing even as the poem argues about them.
- **X.** Sonnet 73 is built on three metaphors that grow shorter, and the shrinking is the point.
- **Y.** By the closing couplet, the structure has done its work: what remains is small enough to hold — which is exactly what the speaker asks the beloved to love.
- **Z.** The first quatrain measures a life by seasons; the second by the hours of one day; the third by the few minutes of a fire burning down.

First: Second: Third: Fourth:

Section C — The two texts together (2 marks)

Tasks 11–12 draw on Text 1 and Text 2 together. Section 3D defines an **intertextual connection** as a link a text makes to another text — by allusion, quotation, parody or retelling — where a reader’s knowledge of the first text changes what they take the second text to mean.

Task 11 (1 mark)

In Text 1, the grandfather speaks a line of Text 2: ‘In me thou see’st the glowing of such fire.’ By Section 3D’s definition, this is best described as

- A. a coincidence — the two texts happen to share an image of fire.
- B. an intertextual connection: a link by quotation, where knowing the sonnet changes what ‘Embers’ means.
- C. a parody — ‘Embers’ mocks the sonnet’s seriousness.
- D. a summary — ‘Embers’ retells the sonnet’s events as a story.

Task 12 (1 mark)

Text 2 ends by saying that perceiving someone’s age ‘makes thy love more strong, / To love that well which thou must leave ere long’. What does the connection mainly do to the reading of Text 1?

- A. It reframes the last night: once a reader knows the sonnet is about loving well what must soon be left, the grandfather’s quiet banking of the fire reads as a farewell he cannot say outright.
 - B. It shows the grandfather correcting the poet — fires, he insists, last longer than poets claim.
 - C. It turns the story into a retelling of the sonnet, with the removalists playing the part of night.
 - D. It adds nothing: the quoted line is decoration, and the reading stays the same with or without it.
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End of Check C2 — 20 marks.

Check C2 — Solutions and coverage

Check C2 · Chapter 3 · Literary craft: voice and devices · 20 marks

Objective key

Task	Answer	Mark(s)
Task 1	B	1
Task 2	C	1
Task 3	A	1
Task 4	D	1
Task 5	[1] cold · [2] say · [3] weather (1 mark per blank)	3
Task 6	mark 'Furthermore'	1
Task 7	C	1
Task 8	A	1
Task 9	Quote 1: bare-ruined-choirs metaphor · Quote 2: twilight imagery · Quote 3: death as sleep's twin · Quote 4: fire-on-ashes metaphor (1 mark per slot)	4
Task 10	X → Z → W → Y (1 mark per correctly placed sentence)	4
Task 11	B	1
Task 12	A	1

Total: 20 marks.

Worked solutions

Task 1 — B. B stays inside the voice: first person, plain short declarations, concrete fact (the removalists, eight o'clock). A sounds like an essay about families; C turns up a melodrama the narrator never uses; D sounds like a settlement notice. Section 3F's test: no line may sound like a different speaker.

Task 2 — C. C keeps the dials where Text 1 sets them — the teacher-and-learner scene, the short fragment (*Two big logs like bookends*), the concrete imagery. A is an instruction manual; B explains the scene's meaning from outside, which Text 1 never does; D is melodrama again.

Task 3 — A. A answers in the narrator's own coin: an image from the narrator's world (*the way he looks at weather*), short beats (*No blame. Just reading it.*). B inflates the moment past the voice's temperature; C generalises about 'generations', which is essay talk; D reports an interaction from nowhere, like minutes of a meeting.

Task 4 — D. D closes where the voice lives: the grandfather's words, then the fire's three small beats — *ticks, and settles, and keeps time* — returning the opening image (a fire is a clock). A tells the reader what to understand; B quotes studies; C labels the fire 'a symbol', and Text 1's images never announce themselves.

Task 5 — [1] cold; [2] say; [3] weather. The voice is plain, concrete and sensory. *Cold* is what the hand would report of a burnt-down fire; *decommissioned* and *concluded* belong to machinery and meetings. *Say* is the plain verb the narrator uses everywhere; *articulate* and *deliver* are office words. *Weather* is the narrator's own returning image — Section 3F: a voice strengthens when its own words return; the other two options are formal abstractions.

Task 6 — mark 'Furthermore'. Everything around it is in the voice — the spoon measure, 'the pot's share', the fire wanting its breakfast. *Furthermore* is an essay connective; no speaker who says *the pot's share* reaches for it. That is Section 3F's drift: the information could be true, but the speaker changed.

Task 7 — C. The tone is dry and tender: affection held under the surface. The evidence is in what the voice refuses to do — no complaint about the sale, no declaration of love; the feeling sits in the small steady details (*You feed it before it asks*) and the joke under the poem line (*like it was the weather*). A needs celebration the passage never sounds; B needs blame; D needs hurry — and the passage’s rhythm is the opposite of hurried.

Task 8 — A. Section 3E: a first-person witness inside the event, understanding partly, opens a gap the reader fills — *It comes out wrong, and I hear it the moment it lands* reports more than the narrator explains. That gap is the engine of sympathy. The passage withholds the sale’s story (so there is no suspense to resolve), the removalists never act on page, and nothing is played for laughter.

Task 9 — Quote 1: bare-ruined-choirs metaphor; Quote 2: twilight imagery; Quote 3: death as sleep’s twin; Quote 4: fire-on-ashes metaphor. The matching follows what each device does. ‘Bare ruined choirs’ compares the boughs — and the speaker — to a stripped church where singing used to be: what once sang stands empty. The twilight lines build a picture for the eyes — light going by degrees toward night. ‘Death’s second self’ names sleep as death’s twin, and the effect is quietness: everything sealed in rest. The ashes lines keep the fire metaphor through: life lying on the remains of its own youth, burning down. The spring generalisation matches nothing — the sonnet never promises recovery; it moves the other way.

Task 10 — X → Z → W → Y. Section 3D’s analytical shape: claim, evidence, what the evidence does, link to interpretation. X makes the claim (three metaphors that grow shorter). Z gives the evidence — seasons, then hours, then the minutes of a fire. W says what the evidence does: the reader feels the years narrowing. Y links the structure back to the couplet’s meaning: what remains is small enough to hold, which is what the speaker asks to be loved. Any other order breaks the logic — the evidence cannot lead because it supports X’s claim, and Y needs the whole paragraph behind it.

Task 11 — B. Section 3D’s definition, applied: Text 1 links itself to Text 2 by quotation, and a reader who knows the sonnet reads ‘Embers’ differently because of it. It is not coincidence — the grandfather presents the line as a poem he knows (‘The poet wrote it about growing old’). It is not parody — nothing mocks — and not a summary: the story is the grandfather’s own, not the sonnet’s retold.

Task 12 — A. The sonnet’s closing couplet says that seeing someone’s age makes love stronger — ‘To love that well which thou must leave ere long.’ Once that is in the reading, the grandfather’s last night changes: banking the fire, passing on the trick, the line dropped ‘like it was the weather’ all read as a farewell conducted sideways, the way this voice conducts everything. B reverses the link — the grandfather borrows the poet’s image, he does not correct it. C forces a retelling the text does not support (the removalists are movers, not night). D denies the connection that Section 3D exists to show: the knowledge changes the reading.

Model sustained-voice passages — F12 model texts

Per §7.5, the solutions carry model sustained-voice passages. Below, Text 1 is assembled with every correct scaffolded choice in place, each move labelled; then the completed morning-after cloze passage; then the exemplar analytical paragraph (F11).

‘Embers’, complete, with the scaffolded choices labelled

Grandpa says a fire is a clock. You feed it before it asks, he says. Never after.

[Continuation 1 — plain declaration, concrete] This is the last night in the house. The removalists come at eight, and the rooms already wear that surprised look rooms get when the shelves go. Grandpa does not say anything about it. He keeps the fire going instead.

[Continuation 2 — fragments, concrete imagery] He shows me how to bank it for the night. Two big logs like bookends. Ash raked forward like a blanket. ‘In me thou see’st the glowing of such fire,’ he says, not looking up. That is his way — dropping a line of an old poem into a sentence like it was the weather. The poet wrote it about growing old, he says. About ashes.

Outside, the streetlight finds the bare patch of lawn where the elm was. The fire ticks and settles.

‘You’ll take the fire somewhere,’ I say. It comes out wrong, and I hear it the moment it lands.

[Continuation 3 — the narrator’s own image, short beats] He looks at me the way he looks at weather. No blame. Just reading it.

[Continuation 4 — the opening image returns] ‘Fires move,’ he says. ‘That is the whole trick of them.’
The fire ticks, and settles, and keeps time.

Every dial holds from first line to last: first-person witness (person and viewpoint), plain concrete diction, short beats mixed with one longer unhurried sentence, dry tenderness, and sensory imagery doing the feeling’s work. The four continuations sustain because they change nothing the voice set.

Morning-after cloze passage, completed

The truck comes at eight, same as promised. The fire is **[cold]** by then — just the ash’s grey blanket, and one log keeping its small red line. Grandpa stands at the gate with his hat in his hands. He does not **[say]** the house goodbye. He nods at it once, the way you nod at **[weather]**.

The three correct choices keep the voice: the sensory report (*cold*), the plain verb (*say*), and the returning image (*weather*) — Section 3F’s echo: a voice strengthens when its own words return.

Exemplar analytical paragraph (Task 10 assembled) — F11 exemplar

Sonnet 73 is built on three metaphors that grow shorter, and the shrinking is the point. The first quatrain measures a life by seasons; the second by the hours of one day; the third by the few minutes of a fire burning down. Each image holds less time than the one before it, so the reader feels the years narrowing even as the poem argues about them. By the closing couplet, the structure has done its work: what remains is small enough to hold — which is exactly what the speaker asks the beloved to love.

The paragraph follows Section 3D’s shape: claim → evidence → what the evidence does → link to interpretation. Every sentence earns its place; the evidence sentence is checkable against the poem, and the closing sentence returns to the couplet’s own words.

CD coverage mapping (per item)

Task	CD code	Section	Family	H5P content type
Task 1	VC2E10LE06	3F	F12	Multiple Choice
Task 2	VC2E10LE06	3F	F12	Multiple Choice
Task 3	VC2E10LE06	3F	F12	Multiple Choice
Task 4	VC2E10LE06	3F	F12	Multiple Choice
Task 5	VC2E10LE06	3F	F12	Fill in the Blanks
Task 6	VC2E10LE06	3F	F12	Mark the Words
Task 7	VC2E10LE05	3E	F10	Multiple Choice
Task 8	VC2E10LE05	3E	F10	Multiple Choice
Task 9	VC2E10LE04	3D	F10	Drag and Drop
Task 10	VC2E10LE04	3D	F11	Sort the Paragraphs
Task 11	VC2E10LE04	3D	F10	Multiple Choice
Task 12	VC2E10LE04	3D	F10	Multiple Choice

Marks by CD: LE06 — 8 · LE05 — 2 · LE04 — 10. **All three CDs covered; LE06 is primary.**